Title: **Essential Meditations with Eckhart Tolle**
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“**Essential Meditations with Eckhart Tolle” PDF Text Transcript**
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Sounds True presents Essential Meditations with Eckhart Tolle, guided sessions and practical teachings. And now session one, entering the meditative state and sitting together with Eckhart Tolle. Well, welcome to our meditation or meditative talk. There may be quite a few newcomers to meditation or mindfulness as it's often called. So let's start with some very basic things.

To enter that meditative state of consciousness because that's what it is all about. Meditation is about a shift in consciousness away from concern with doing and thinking and becoming aware, really directly aware of the present moment. And that's perhaps the easiest and most accessible starting point for most people, to enter the state of presence, which is the aim of meditation is to get you into that state of absolute presence in this moment. And that's being, becoming aware of being. Most people are always engaged in doing.

That includes thinking continuously. And a lot of the thinking that people do is not very uplifting. A lot of the thinking that happens compulsively creates negative feelings. And a lot of thinking is actually harmful and dysfunctional. It doesn't serve any useful purpose, but you just can't stop it.

Well, you think you can't, but you can. And that's, of course, what meditation is about, to realize there is in you a deeper dimension of consciousness, deeper or higher, you could call it, depending from where you look at it, deeper or higher than thinking. And that is the state of presence in the now. So it's an amazing realization for most people that they can actually easily access that state of presence by bringing their attention into the present moment, like now. So I'm kind of while I'm talking, my aim is to talk you, so to speak, into that state of meditation.

And it helps if while I talk, you can become conscious or aware of the small gaps between words as I talk. So you're just aware not only of the words, of course, you hear the words, you

take them in, but you're also aware that there are little spaces between the words. You just acknowledge that. These are little meditative gaps, so to speak. And in order to be really aware of the meditative gaps, you can't be thinking.

You are just aware of that space. There is what does that mean, aware? There is a presence in that awareness. You know in that awareness, right now, you know that you are here as a conscious presence without any thought telling you that. In other words, you become aware of yourself not as a person, because to be a person, you need to be thinking about you and your life and your problems and so on.

But there's a deeper dimension in you, deeper than the person. And this is what we are here to access. So you become aware that really, on the surface of your life, there is the person with a past and a future and all the thinking and the emotions that keep the person going, of course. And so you're happy one day, unhappy the next. Happy one day, unhappy.

The fluctuations of the person, it's quite normal. And the person is always concerned with doing and thinking and the next thing or the past, the future. The past is never really present. When you become present, like now, you realize that there is a deeper part in you. There is a deeper dimension to who you are, where you are more than a person, where you are a presence, a conscious presence.

The question is, can you sense, feel, or be aware of yourself at this moment as a conscious presence without which there couldn't even be a person. So it's almost like saying the person is the surface of the ocean or the ripples or the waves on the surface of the ocean, but you are not just the ripples or waves on the surface of the ocean, You are the ocean. So there's a deeper presence in you. And to access that and to sense that in yourself, to sense yourself as the presence, a presence, that is what liberates you from being completely trapped and limited in an exclusively personal identity. In other words, there is more to you than meets the eye.

You are deeper than you ever knew by thinking about yourself. And it's not difficult. To access that dimension in yourself. Can one describe it? Well, one can give a few pointers.

Let's see if that makes sense. The pointers I'm giving you now, Let's see if they make sense in your own experience at this moment. Sensing yourself as a presence. There is a peacefulness there. There is a that is really the essence of what is sometimes called inner peace.

The person, the surface of the ocean, the waves and the ripples of the ocean cannot be at peace for long. It fluctuates. Occasionally, if things happen to go well, yeah, unhappy, Never lasts for very long. Then the storm comes and big waves come or little little irritated waves, whatever. Then you're unhappy.

But there's a deeper if, let's say, you are a rebel on the surface of the ocean with a name and a date of birth and a past and a future and and problems, And suddenly, the ripple realizes there's more to me and realizes, oh, I'm actually much deeper and vaster. I'm the ocean manifesting as

the ripple. And so you are the universe or the consciousness that underlies the sense perceived universe manifesting temporarily as a person. You are the universe becoming conscious of itself at this moment in your life as a person. You are not separate from the totality of the universe.

You are the universe. The universe has or the consciousness that underlies the universe has given form to who you are temporarily in order to experience itself as a person. It's an amazing thing. And the universe here is in the process of becoming more conscious. That's what the entire evolution of the universe is about.

It's consciousness. So you your life is part of the evolutionary impulse towards greater consciousness. And if your life is not primarily about greater consciousness, which actually you can build into whatever you do, it doesn't mean you stop doing and just say, all I'm interested in consciousness. No, it needs to flow into what you do. If your life purpose is not aligned with the conscious the evolving consciousness of the universe, then what is the point of it all?

And then sooner or later, you get very frustrated and things become pointless. So you are here to become more conscious because that's what the universe is has put you here for. Instead of universe, you can use other terms. You're more comfortable with them. The universal intelligence, god.

So right now, in addition to being a person, which right now is not important, It becomes important again when we finish our meditation, I'm sure. But right now, something else is more important. That's realizing yourself as the presence. Coming into the present moment and feeling, just being aware right now that you are conscious. If you were not conscious, you wouldn't be able to hear, see, perceive anything.

The fact that you can perceive things, the fact that you can think, the fact that you can have emotions, all implies that you are conscious. The meditative state is becoming aware directly of that consciousness. Sometimes the word that is used also is stillness. Right now, you become still. You become aware of just being, of being that presence.

And that feels energizing. You don't go to sleep. You're actually alert and still at the same time. And now you access an intelligence that is deeper than the thinking mind by entering that state of alert presence. And then when you think again, you are connected with the source of all intelligence, with creativity.

You are you become empowered. Your thinking and your doing and your actions are then aligned with a deeper purpose of the universe, not just little egoic desires. So all this is so terribly important. Aligning your life with that presence. So you need to, during your normal day, I'll give you a few hints of how to invite that presence into your life, which by invite, I mean direct your attention to it because it's always there, that really is what supports you in life.

And if you can be aware of that, fear, anxiety happen less and less in your life because you can feel supported by that vast presence, which is not just your it's not your own presence. It is the

universal presence of consciousness. You connect with that. You are that. So on a normal day, you go to work or whatever you do As much as you can, become aware of just brief moments of yourself as the presence in addition to being a person.

So one of the things I recommend is, it sounds almost too simple, but from time to time, look at the sky for a few seconds. You look up. It doesn't matter whether it's blue or cloudy. Today, here is the early afternoon. It happens to be a sunny day.

Look at the sky for a moment. You're looking but not thinking. You could do that with anything, but it sky is easier because it's this vast expanse that has some correlation with the presence of stillness within you. So you look, and for a moment, there's just there is the sky, and you can sense yourself as the presence that is perceiving, and you're not thinking. So there's a brief moment of not thinking, but not going to sleep.

Alertness without thinking, that's the key. To bring that into your life more often. And don't believe when your mind tells you that you need to think and think and think all the time. Bring in gaps of just alert presence. That's the being.

The rest is the doing. The two need to be there needs to be a balance in your life between being and doing. Otherwise, you go mad. The civilization that completely loses touch with the being dimension is going to self destruct. And a person who completely loses touch with the being dimension is going to be very unhappy, unfulfilled, always anxious or depressed, or always stressed.

Many people live in continuous stress. What does that mean? They're always focused on the next thing, and the next thing pulls them away from where they are here and now. And always there's the promise when I reach that point, I'll be okay. But, of course, the reaching that point is always very brief, and then they realize, oh, I'm not okay.

I need to reach another point. It's a great thing, of course, to have goals in life. But if the goal takes up so much of your attention continuously where you need to get to that you continuously miss the present moment, which after all is all there ever is, then your life is completely out of balance. The balance is, yes, having goals. You know where you're going.

That's good. But you are aware of the step you're taking at this moment, and you're aware of the flowers, the sky, the trees, life that continuously unfolds around you. You acknowledge, you honor the present moment. And on a deeper level, you are aware of yourself as the presence. So I also recommend that during the your normal day, you become familiar with perceiving things that are around you without thinking you need to judge or label or interpret them or name them all the time.

So for example, you can look at a tree or the sky or anything, a piece of furniture, an animal without naming it. You're just this is a lovely practice. You can do it right now because you're

looking at me. Well, I to you, I am an image on the screen and the words that you're hearing. You can look at this image on the screen, me, without saying anything mentally about it.

What for? You can actually perceive it better, more clearly without the interference of thinking. So you're just there as the alert presence in the background of your perceptions. Right now, you're looking at me, and you're aware of yourself, which is more important than me. You're aware of yourself as that which makes the perception possible.

Presence, conscious presence. And the same thing you can do, looking at anything, you look at a chair, a table for a few seconds, And you're not labeling it mentally. You're not interpreting it. Just clear perception. So then there are two dimensions to the sense perception.

There's whatever is being perceived by the senses, hearing, seeing, perhaps touching, whatever, and the presence behind it, which is the deeper dimension of who you are. And so in that way, you bypass the person when you perceive things. You can bypass the person because the person interprets according to his or her conditioning. But if you want to transcend your con the conditioning of your mind, you can perceive without interpretation, unless an interpretation is necessary. So you bring if it's people may ask you something, then you have to speak, or sometimes things will come.

That's fine. Thoughts come. You cannot be totally free of labeling and interpreting, and you need it sometimes. Sometimes you need to figure things out. At other times, trying to figure something out adds nothing to the experience.

It detracts from the experience. So be aware also of beauty around you. And the more present you are perceiving in this clear, nonjudgmental way, the more you will see beauty and aliveness around you. That before you had ignored because you were always going somewhere else or your attention was so absorbed by thinking that you are only sufficiently aware, peripherally aware of your surroundings, just preventing you from bumping into things, but otherwise totally in your head thinking about your problems. So you get out of that into presence, and so the balance comes into your life.

So make it a practice to perceive things in that state of alert presence. And another little very helpful, perhaps it is a kind of technique to enable you to be present is, as I call it, to feel the aliveness inside your body. That sounds perhaps a little strange if you are not you haven't heard this before. What do you mean feel the aliveness in your body? Well, for those of you who have not had a glimpse of that yet, I suggest the following little practice right now.

If you hold your, let's say, your right or your left hand, just hold it and close your eyes for a moment. And so your hand is kind of just floating there. Close your eyes for a moment and ask yourself, without opening my eyes, without moving my hand, and without touching anything, is there any way I can know whether my right hand is still there? So you're not moving your hand, you're not touching anything. You're not looking at it because your eyes are closed.

Is there any way you can know whether it's a weird question, that's true, but it's it it gets you somewhere. Is there any way you can know whether your right hand is still there? How can you know that without looking or moving your hand or touching anything? Okay. Let's see now.

Is your right hand still there? And now you will notice you can feel it. You can feel it. You can feel its presence from the inside. At first, it's very subtle, and then you feel it more strongly.

And if you now open your eyes, you will notice that you can still feel your right hand even though other perceptions have come in. You're looking again. But even as you're looking, you can still feel the aliveness inside your hand. That takes some of your attention away from continuous thinking. I would now recommend that you expand that a little.

And even without closing your eyes now, see if you can feel the energy in both your hands at the same time. Or if you like, close your eyes for a few seconds, and then you might notice it gets a little stronger, that feeling. Undoubtedly, your hands are alive. There is an aliveness in there. Of course there is, because that's what keeps the body going.

If that aliveness leaves, the molecules and atoms that make up your hand would very quickly depart. They would not be together anymore, and that would be the end of your body. So what holds your body together, there is an energy there that is the organizing principle behind the physical form of the body. It's invisible. And scientists haven't found it yet, because the only way you can find it was is by not by looking outside, but by introspection, by looking within.

So you can sense the energy in your hands. That's okay. That's good. That takes some of your attention away from thinking. It brings you a little bit more into the present moment.

And then you might want to experiment. See, usually, if I can feel my hands, perhaps I can also feel the energy in my feet. So your attention goes you direct your attention. There. It goes there.

Are my feet still there? Yes. Perhaps not as strong a feeling as the hands, but, yes, you can feel your feet too. So initially, you can just play around with that a little bit and feel hold that attention for a couple of minutes in your feet and your hands and feet. See if you can feel your feet and your hands simultaneously right now.

And it's quite pleasant. And you may notice right now, as you're aware of the energy in your feet and your hands and you keep your attention there, there isn't that much attention left for thinking. So you this is where the state of alert presence opens up. And then you may notice a little bit, the rest of the body also you begin to feel, not as strongly as the hands or feet, but you begin to feel that a sense of aliveness pervades your entire body. And that is a lovely meditation in itself.

A wonderful time to practice it, for example, is at night before going to sleep. You lie on your bed on your back, stretch out your hands flat on your back. And instead of thinking about your problems or about all the obnoxious people in your life, you take your attention into the energy

field of the body and feel the aliveness. You always usually start with the hands, then gradually bring in other parts of the arms. And as I speak now, I hope that you can verify in your own experience right now what it is I'm talking about, which is feeling the aliveness in your body.

And then at night, you can do it beautifully and actually enjoy feeling alive. It is joyful to feel that, yeah, that your body is being pervaded by this energy, which is not separate from who you are, which is who you are, which is consciousness. The organizing principle behind the hundreds and thousands of functions that keep the body alive that need to be coordinated every second that is of such vast complexity that even now, with all the advances we've made in science, we only understand a tiny fraction of how the body actually works. There is an expression of vast intelligence behind it that is the organizing principle behind the body. And so to get in touch with that deeper intelligence is a wonderful thing.

And then you realize when you enter the state of presence, you become present with your entire body. Every cell feels more alive. And you become still. You might have noticed that when you really feel the inner body, as I call it, you're not thinking anymore. You're just present.

And the more you access being just present, it's almost paradoxical, the more effective, creative, powerful your thinking becomes when you do think. And the less negative and destructive, self destructive your thinking becomes. So we are talking about finding the intelligence, the deeper intelligence within you. You don't want to always having to go to some other source for the really important answers in your life. Please tell me I need to know this or that.

Yes. It's good to want to know. That's part of the evolution, the evolutionary impulse. But any spiritual teacher, any whether the spiritual teacher is in the physical form or you have some other teacher as a spirit guide or whatever it is. Any true teacher will teach you, show you, demonstrate how to access the source of all knowledge and wisdom in yourself.

So that's what this evolution is about. Let's see if you can still feel yourself right now as that alive presence, your entire body is just being. And it's not a question of necessarily either being or doing, although sometimes it's good to just be, but also even while you do, you can be aware of being. For example, you're driving. You're stopping at the lights.

What is there to do now? Nothing. No matter how much you think that you want to be somewhere else, you're not. Why not use that opportunity whenever there's a red light and you stop your car if you drive? Or if you're a pedestrian, you stop at the stand, you stop walking at the light.

Use that those moments for that one moment and feel the aliveness in your body and feel the presence. Whenever you're waiting for something, And it's amazing how much time we actually spend waiting. Oh, but I read the other day that they figured out in the average person's life who drives between the age of 20 and 70 or whatever, that person spends several days of his or her

life waiting in the car at the red light. If you add it all up, it makes up several days of this person's life. And then you have many other occasions when you wait, you wait for the elevator.

Why not use all these waiting times you wait in line at the supermarket, you wait in line at the airport? Instead of complaining in your head that you would rather not be waiting or how inefficient these people are, and this creates negative emotion, doesn't make your life more pleasant. Instead of that, just be aware of the aliveness in your body and bring your attention into just this moment. Be comfortable with this moment. You feel alive inside, and you can even you can look around at the aliveness outside people doing this, doing that, traffic, moving there, moving there.

And you can actually enjoy the world. It's miraculous. All these life forms that continuously appear and dance their dance for a little while to be replaced by other life forms. But it's all the expression of one underlying consciousness, one life taking on many forms. But your true identity is that one life.

Life is one. But there's no need to believe that because then it's only just another belief, which you can say, oh, no. Somebody else is not one. Okay? So So it's not a belief when you get still and present without losing alertness, in fact, gaining more alertness, then you are in touch with the oneness, the one.

And that is the source of all life that has form because that is formless. What you call that one life is up to you. Universal intelligence, the one, god, or as the Buddha called it, emptiness, which really means formlessness. That's what the Buddha pointed to as the essence. Or as Jesus called it, the kingdom of heaven.

The same as Buddhist term emptiness. Heaven is vast spaciousness. In many languages, heaven and sky are the same word. Vast spaciousness. Formless one life.

That's who you are. Really, this is all about knowing yourself. That's the journey you are on. It's the journey to yourself. It's a journey without distance.

And I thank you for joining us, and I wish you well on your journey. It's a wonderful adventure. Welcome to our live meditation. We're only interested in one thing here for our live meditation and that is to sit together, not physically together, but nevertheless together in presence. Thinking is not important here.

As much as possible, let go of thinking without any effort. And realize that you are more fully yourself when you're not thinking. And when you're not thinking, you can realize what being is, what it means to be. And you can sense the being that you are, which can be expressed as the first person singular of the verb to be, I am. So you sense, or you are, the presence prior to thinking, the clear space of presence.

That's why we're here, to be that, to realize that we are that. I don't think, as I sit here. The words just come out of the stillness. There's no thinking prior to the words. And as soon as a word has been uttered, there's just presence or stillness.

So you can join me in that. As I don't need to think, you don't need to think right now, but just be present. The great teacher Ramana Maharshi, who taught during the first half of the twentieth century in India, was once asked by a visitor to his ashram this question. How do I know whether I'm making progress on the spiritual path? And he said, the degree of absence of thought is the only true criterion for your progress on the spiritual path.

The extent, in other words, to which you are free of thought in daily life. Still able to use thought whenever it's needed perfectly, more efficiently than before, more creatively, because you have access to the unconditioned intelligence itself, which is presence. How long you can sit in meditation, formal meditation, is not a good criterion for progress on the spiritual path, but to what extent presence comes into your daily life. Which initially may just mean little moments of presence in between all the doings of your life, little moments of being. Awareness, alertness, alert stillness, conscious consciously looking at something, consciously listening, consciously walking across the room, consciously washing your hands.

Which does not mean when you walk across the room you're thinking I am now crossing the room. Or when you look at something, I'm now looking at that tree, that you're not present yet. It can be an intermediate step, but the actual presence is when there's no background commentary. And when there's virtually no background commentary throughout your life, that is the awakened state. There may still be fragments of thoughts saying this or that, but basically, you're fundamentally free of the involuntary, compulsive background commentary in your daily life.

That's an enormous evolutionary leap to live like that. But you don't need to have that as some aim. I want to be totally free. Just be free of background commentary now. It's easier than just say, throughout my life, I want to be free of that.

Well, just do it now. Renounce unnecessary thinking. Being present instead. Then the ego diminishes and eventually cannot survive in you when you are present. People have practiced traditionally all kinds of renunciations in spiritual life, in Christianity and Buddhism and Hinduism and so on.

And they're still being practiced in many cultures to some extent. Renunciation of possessions, Renunciation of your name. Let go of your old name. Adopt a new spiritual name. Prenunciation of physical comforts, exposing the body to discomfort, All these can be helpful, but if the most basic renunciation is not known, then the most basic attachment will still be there.

And that's attachment to your thoughts. You haven't renounced unnecessary thinking. Setting aside a period for being present is traditionally called meditation. So you could say that that's

what we are doing here, although we are not really doing anything. All we are doing, which is not a doing, is realizing our presence.

Realizing presence. Right now, in different parts of the planet, little points of consciousness waking up Where before there was only a person, there's now conscious presence arising. Different parts of the planet at the same time. And this of course has no form, And there's no time. Past and future become irrelevant in presence.

And that's an amazing realization that who you essentially are, your feeling of identity, of essential identity, does not need the future to complete itself. It is already complete. It does not need the past. So you don't need past to know who you are. That's a delusion.

It's a story. You don't need future to finally arrive at some more complete version of yourself because presence is already complete. You are already complete in presence. One could say your presence is the cream. Whatever happens in time and whatever happens in future to you is the skimmed milk.

And once you know the cream and have the cream, then skimmed milk is not that important anymore. So as more presence arises, you lose the fear of death. Which, of course, arises because you unconsciously think you need more time to be fully yourself. Of course, the truth is you need to get out of time to be fully yourself. So we are here relaxed and allowed at the same time.

Alertness does not require tension. And to be free of tension does not mean that you're going towards sleep. And at this moment, who are you? With no reference to your story, The space of presence. Not a person.

You still look like a person from the outside. So with this shift, the person recedes and presence arises. You don't lose anything real in this. And what about my personal identity? I don't want to lose that.

If you look more deeply, at the bottom of what you feel is your personal identity, there's the fact that right now you are conscious. That's the foundation of what you sense and call your personal identity. It's consciousness is your personal identity. It gives light to the story of who you are, which consists of thoughts and the past. Past is thoughts.

The consciousness is the light behind your story. Without it, there would be nothing. Let's close our eyes for a moment and just continue to be present without any visual perception. If thoughts interfere, take your attention into the inner body. Feel the aliveness inside the body.

Be present with every cell of the body. Presence, of course, transcends the body, but it shines through the form. Open your eyes. Look around the room wherever you are and stay present. Be the awareness behind the perceptions, innocent, fresh perception, alert perception, a

handbag at the screen, As we finish our meditation, you may want to sit a little longer in the stillness.

And when you then start moving again, start doing things, carry that presence as much as possible with you. Thank you. Our program continues with session two, living a presence based life. Some people have requested a little bit more stillness. And of course there's always stillness behind the words because they kind of come out of the stillness, but I cannot guarantee that I will not speak at all because who knows what the present moment brings.

A couple of hours ago, I looked at this book that came out not that long ago, and I got inspired to read a poem to you before we start our meditation. That's by Steve Taylor, who is a British writer of mostly of nonfiction. He writes about awakening and the ego and so on, but in his spare time, when he's on a train or in between looking after his, if they have several little children, he writes poems and he privately sent me occasionally a few. And I said, they are so good, you need to write a few more and then you can publish them. And here's the result.

So that's the calm center by Steve Taylor. And these are your different poems that can take you into presence. The title of this poem is The Story. Your story is always there if you need to remind yourself of who you are, like a stream flowing beside you that you can always step into and swim with for a while whenever you lose direction or feel vulnerable and need to refresh your sense of self. And when you're flowing with that stream of memories, you might feel proud of how far you've come to this moment of bright achievement.

Look back up stream and smile with vindication at the fools who slighted and doubted you. Or you might ache inside with failure, looking back at the meandering muddy tracks that haven't led anywhere except to this place of pain. You can be a hero or a villain, depending on your story, Or you can let the stream flow by and accept this moment in its wholeness without reference to any other before or after. You can sit and observe outside the story, not as a character, but as the author, grounded in another identity that was never created and doesn't need a plot or conclusion because it's already complete. Remember, you're not doing a meditation.

You're just being. For some people, it works better to have their eyes closed. Others could keep their eyes open. You can meditate with your eyes open, or you can alternate. Inevitably, some of you may get drawn into a stream of thinking.

If your eyes are closed and you're losing yourself in a stream of thinking, when you notice it, you can open your eyes to break the stream. Press is a good entry point into presence. Need to find out for yourself if you can just be present without any particular method or technique. That's what they do in Zen. There's no method.

They call meditation sitting, just sitting, observing what arises. Thoughts can be like little clouds or big ones. You are the sky, the empty sky, being aware of the clouds passing. And there may be moments when no cloud passes, so there's just spaciousness. You can also use body awareness, inner body awareness as an anchor for presence.

If thoughts interfere a lot or you tend to lose yourself in them, use the inner body awareness as an anchor to keep you present. Awareness of the energy in your hands, your arms, your legs, feet, belly, an important point in some forms of meditation, the belly and the entire inner body. As long as you feel the inner body as one single energy field, you can't do much thinking. You can't do any thinking. And you may notice the body loves it, loves being noticed.

Can you be aware right now that you are aware? Aware of awareness. That sounds like duality, but only when you talk about it. Language works in that way. Self aware.

Awareness is aware of itself. Consciousness is aware of itself. They're not two, but one. Awareness can never be an object in consciousness. It's the eternal subject.

Another beautiful pointer. Here's the question. Who am I? And then Look for the answer, which is not a thought. That which is looking for the answer in you is the answer.

You can say the same about god. I allow myself to use that word tonight. If you're looking for God, The very energy behind the looking is the light of God in you, that is consciousness. Who am I? The greatest skill is the ability to step out of thought and then back into thought when you need it.

Right now, you don't need it. As more presence manifests in your life, even when you step back into thought, it's not the same kind of thinking that you had before when you were completely identified with it. Even while you're thinking, there will be tiny little gaps, so thought will no longer have the density that it had before. There'll be awareness shining through your thoughts. Thoughts then no longer have the heaviness they had before.

They lose their ability to make you unhappy, to make your life miserable. You are no longer thought based, a thought based entity, you are presence based. Bringing attention back to your breathing whenever you feel. Getting lost in thinking. Just am I still breathing?

Oh, yes. Can I still feel the inner body? Yes. And you're out of thinking. You may have to do that several times, many times.

If discomfort arises or impatience, just allow it to be, it's just it's there, it arises, something in you might want you to get up or do something. Just observe that it arises. You allow it to be, and that impulse then subsides. You become the space for it. I'll ring this bell from time to time now so that to remind you of presence, calling you always back from thinking, back into presence.

When thoughts do arise, you don't need to follow them with your attention. Every thought wants to grow. Come this way, it says. It's really important to think about this now. Of course it isn't, and you just let it go.

You don't have to follow the thought, be drawn into it. You don't fight it. It's fine if it comes as a thought. There's your life situation when you start thinking, you remember your past or your situation in life, circumstances, But underneath all that is your consciousness. It comes out of that.

As in this little poem I write, there's the river of your story, good or bad, and you can step out of the river. It's still there. It's not going anywhere. If you choose to have your eyes open, you can notice how amazing and wonderful it is to be able to perceive this room, whatever is in it, without imposing any interpretation on it, just as an aware presence. You can take in the totality of this room.

Be aware of it and my voice, it's another perception. And at the same time, be aware of yourself, not the story self, but at the same time as you perceive. This room with your senses, you hear, you see, you perhaps sense externally with your body. You're also aware of the inner body, perhaps at the same time, And underneath it all, that which makes it possible, is you as the awareness. That is what the Early twentieth century, spiritual teacher Gurdjieff called self remembrance.

And that is what the letter e refer to at the Temple Of Apollo in Delphi. You are and you know that you are to be at the same time as you perceive the world. You can sense your presence, it's not yours but we just call it yours. It's the presence, the presence in you is this presence in me, it's not two presences, but temporarily let's call it your presence as a pointer. So you perceive this room, perceive this man sitting on a chair talking, the lights, you hear the sounds, the voice, some other background sounds, you sense your body, both the external body, your skin, and the inner energy in the body, this all makes up the present moment, the now.

But that's not the essence of the now, That's the surface of the now. Whatever you perceive is the surface of the now, which changes. Right now, it seems to be static for a little while. We're sitting here, and then we move and it changes. The now is not what happens because that changes all the time, so there's only one now.

People think there are different moments, so many moments every day, every hour, because things happen, different things happen all the time, and they think each happening is a moment. But the now is not what happens. It's the space in which it happens. Never changes. And you are it.

And that's the heart of the universe which is in you. You are it, that space, you are the now. You can just sense that. Sense yourself as the space for it all. When the personality becomes less important, it's a character in the story.

That's okay. You have compassion with the character, you can like the character. Be gentle with it. Don't beat him or her up. Say you are not good enough yet.

The more you're rooted in that which is deeper than the character in your story, the name and so on, the story, the history of you, that is the greatest thing you can do to improve the character. The character becomes more sane, more peaceful. There may still be little bits of insanity surfacing now and then, that's okay. Otherwise the story would become boring. But on the whole, the character of you becomes more loving and peaceful, compassionate and even in whatever activity the character pursues, more effective.

There's more intelligence that flows into the actions of that character, and that intelligence flows from that underlying presence in which your identity rests, that is your identity, no longer the character. That's a relief, oh, because otherwise that character can be so obnoxious. God, troublemaker, either for yourself or for others, usually both. I'm inspired to read one more poem to you. The title, a moment without thought.

A moment without thought and the background noise ceases, and I can suddenly hear the silence between sounds, the silence beneath sound from which all sounds emerge like waves from the sea. A moment without thought and the fog disperses and the world is filled with translucent light, new dimensions of detail and sharpness and color and depth. A moment without thought and these suburban streets are pristine new world like a garden glistening with dew the morning after creation, as if a husk of familiarity has cracked and fallen away, leaving naked primal isness. A moment without thought and I'm no longer standing separate, no longer an island but part of the sea, no longer a static center but part of the flowing stream. A moment without thought and the train has stopped between stations and there was never any motion, never any track.

A moment like a wormhole, infinitely expanding like stepping through a narrow gate to find an endless open plane, the panorama of the present. And this new world of no thought is neither alien nor unfamiliar, but a place where benevolence blows through the air and soft shimmering energy fills every space. And the sunlight is the translucent white light of spirit, the deepest, closest, warmest place, the ground where I am rooted. This ability to look at things or listen to things or other with other senses, smell, taste, touch, As the awareness rather than the interpreting mind, practice that in your daily life. It's a primordial spiritual practice.

If that's your only spiritual practice, it would be quite enough. So innocent perception, it requires awareness, it requires an alertness in the background of your perception. Without the alertness, thinking will always overpower you. The alertness keeps thinking at bay. You remember the story I wrote about in the A New Earth?

It's an ancient zen story where the disciple and the zen master are walking on a long journey through the mountains. And then they stop for a little picnic. And then the disciple, who is still having problems understanding what zen is all about, he's only been there for ten years, he asks the master, I don't quite get it yet. How do I enter zen? Meaning how do I enter the state of consciousness that is zen?

How do I? And the master looks at him and says, can you hear the sound of that mountain stream? And the disciples, no, I can't hear it. The master says, just see if you can listen, see if you can hear it. And this is the point of the master to the disciple to become more alert.

The master associates the alertness with the auditory perception there, so the alertness flows into the auditory perception, and as the master tells him, you have to listen more carefully to hear that mountain stream, And then the disciple, at that moment, the alertness, the awareness in the disciple rises and he goes. And of course at that very moment while he's in that intense listening, he's no longer thinking or trying to figure out what zen is all about. And then he can hear in the far distance is a tiny mountain stream that makes a sound, and suddenly he can hear it, and he says, yes, I can hear it. And the master says, that's it, enter zen from there. This is a practical, to show by means of practical example what that means, that alertness.

Jesus talks about it too, he says, be so awake as if you were, he gives the parable of a servant waiting for the master. He doesn't know when the master come, he may come in very silently, so you have to be alert, don't go to sleep, be alert and wait for the master. So the servant is sitting in that house, The door maybe is, in my version of the story, the servant is on the Upper Floor, and the master could come in any moment, and he's fairly, the master is very quiet. So you go. So the sound basically would be in continuous presence.

Otherwise, he might miss the master. Again, it's an example to show what that state of consciousness is, again, using the analogy with associating awareness with the auditory perception. You can associate it with other perceptions too, or with all perception or with no perception. And there's no stress or strain in that alertness. There isn't a willfulness behind it.

That's not it. You can't hold your breath and make yourself be more alert. I still can't hear the mountain stream. You have to. It's a relaxed alertness that is one, I'll sometimes use the expression vibrational frequency and there is a truth behind it whether or not it's scientific, I don't care by the way, I can sense when, because I also experience fluctuations, there's always a certain alertness in the background, but sometimes there's an increase in alertness and sometimes it's just, it recedes, it's in the background, the awareness, and then the awareness, the light gets a little bit like a dimmer switch, it goes and then it goes, but still there according to the situation.

Now the so called enlightened state, which is a destiny of each human to reach, although many won't reach it in this lifetime, but that's okay. That would mean there's a continuous background awareness, Indian continuous. And you, many of you already have it sporadically and there may be some of you who already have it continuously in the background. The only reason why you're here because it's enjoyable. But there's no point in asking, oh, when is it going to be continuous for me?

Irrelevant question. The only true question is, is it there now? That's the only place where it can be now. It's not Whether it's going to be there ten minutes from now, who knows? Is it going to be there next week when I get home?

Who knows? But when you get home, it's now. So the only relevant question is, am I where now? And if you even remember to ask a question, which is a powerful pointer to awareness, very easily you can step from the question, which is still a thought. I call it a pointer.

Certain thoughts are pointers that point beyond thought. So that says, am I where now? It's a powerful pointer, and after that, you, Yes, that can immediately bring you to that heightened alertness. Am I aware now? Let me just check.

And that checking creates a rise in the vibrational frequency. You can feel that. And you can observe, you can learn to observe in people. It's not judgmental. It's a simple fact.

You can look at a person and to some extent you can see what degree of awareness is there. There are many humans who might never have heard of any spiritual teaching who have some awareness in their life. They don't know what it is, but it's there. I don't like to be stopped and recognized in the street all the time, but it does happen a lot. And when it happens, it's lovely.

So it's a paradox. I try to wear sometimes sunglasses and some baseball cap. A funny incident, I was in a supermarket and I was wearing dark sunglasses and a baseball cap and just looking at the shelves and a man came up to me and said, Hi, Ekater, may I shake your hands? Do people recognize you a lot? Now I am saying this is not infrequently.

I know a few seconds I look at a person, A few seconds before they recognize me, I recognize them. I've never seen them before, but I recognize them. I know there is a fairly strong presence there, and then I know, oh, this person is going and this is not a thought, it's just a realization, this person is going to recognize me. And most of the time I'm right. The opposite sometimes applies to This person won't recognize me though, that's a relief.

But sometimes I'm wrong, not often. But you can observe that there are people who carry a very heavy burden of their own personality through their daily, and they are so burdened by this personality. Their personality has such density that this completely obscures the essence of that person, not that it isn't there, it's there, but it's so obscured. It's just behind these dense layers of mental, emotional layers of years and years of resistance, self generated suffering, unnecessary problem making, and so you get this absent look and the burdens look. And sometimes it happens that these people too can awaken.

In most cases, it means they need a shock. Life sometimes does that to them and that can, like it hits you. So one way of putting it is there's two of you. Ultimately, there's only one, of course, all is one, but I suggest as a helpful pointer temporarily, There's two of you. One is the one that the character that you know, you have that name and a physical body and a psychological body, your history, narrative of you, an identity based on your past, certain patterns that tend to predominate in your life, mental, emotional, and reactive patterns that make up the personality.

That's you, the form identity, I call it. The form is both the physical form and the psychological form. The form identity. That's one you. That's the you as form identity.

And for most people that's it, that's all they know. Then there is a more essential identity which is the formless you that you cannot, there's nothing much to know about it, it is the consciousness of you, it is the spaciousness, It is the unconditioned dimension in you. And for a fruitful and balanced life, both need to be in some kind of balance. If you only have form identity which is a destiny, or well, let me correct myself, anybody who is not completely insane will have some, if limited, access to the unconditioned without knowing it. So there's still some sanity there, some occasional joy, not last doesn't last long, but unless a person is so, so filled with mental clutter, mental, emotional clutter, there's no space for anything left, which is close to extremely dysfunctional behavior, violent behavior, but most people are not really aware of, truly aware of that dimension within themselves, which is the essence for everything else.

The mastery of life is to have some balance, so there's a formless you and you're rooted there, and then you deal with the stuff in the world of form and yourself as a form identity, where this form identity has certain things to do, but if it's connected consciously to the essence identity, then that changes how the form identity operates. I mentioned it earlier in other words, I used other words for it. Very few people are right in the middle where they are, very effective in the world of form as a highly developed character who can operate very effectively in the world of form and at the same time being rooted in the form as well, most people who are very effective in that way are like 70% in their form identity and 30% essence that would be a person who can do a lot of good in this world. I'm more the other way. This doesn't seem to matter so much because I teach that dimension, so it doesn't matter, but I'm not all that effective in the world of form, in dealing with stuff in the world of form, in fact, a little bit dysfunctional quite often, and that is the destiny of some people who have one particular function in this world, and my function is to show the being dimension, so I'm 80% being and 20%, eighty % essence identity and 20% form, which means often things don't get done on the level of form, or I need help.

So a little bit unbalanced, but I'm happy with that. It happens to be my function to show that dimension to the world. That's why I need to be unbalanced. That's my excuse by being. But apart from being an excuse, I also believe it's true.

It's both. Erin is sitting in the front row and smiling. She knows that often her emails don't get answered for a long time. So you have to see where you are and what you resonate with. Are you more drawn to contemplative, the being essence, or the more active, or somewhere in the middle, which is a good place to be?

Oprah operates very well. I'm always amazed how incredibly effective she is and how much energy she puts out into this world to create and do and do, but I'm exhausted. She's still going on. And yet she's also rooted in being. So it's an amazing thing I can't judge exactly the percentage, but now most humans in this world, especially if you go to big cities, go to Manhattan, go to the city of London, go to anywhere, in the big cities they are full of people who

are lost in the doing dimension, in their form identity, and it looks a little bit crazy when you see it, but there is high energy there.

There is a high energy, so when you I walk through Manhattan or London, I know it's a bit crazy this running around. What are they all trying to do? And they're all in a hurry, and obviously they're all trying to get to the next moment. They're not rooted in this moment, but there is this high energy that. This energy can be converted also into presence.

And there are other places in the world where people hang around street corners. Sometimes they are tropical places, but it's so hot you can't do much. And so you hang around, starting. And sometimes it seems, well, maybe it's easier for them to be present, but not necessarily because that there's a lower energy there. That's I have high hopes for the people in the big cities that they are able to see, especially when things start going wrong for them.

I've had several former stock brokers and investment people who experienced a collapse, who suddenly went deeper. So for them, it's very hard for a Wall Street big successful guy, man, or woman from there to go into the essence identity from this highly so much emphasis on form identity is almost impossible without the intervening collapse of something that they had completely identified with. And then this high energy can suddenly manifest as presence. But something has to happen then first to demolish their form identity, and usually life looks after that anyway, sooner or later. And if they don't go into their essence identity and discover that dimension and become rooted in that dimension, then they are incredibly unhappy when there's a collapse of a highly developed form identity.

For example, there was this made of banker who had all these invest scam, many many people lost all their savings through Mr. Madoff who is now in a prison somewhere, and his sons I think both of them quickly died of cancer after it all happened. The sons did not go to prison although they were working in his company, and the other one committed suicide. Potentially these two sons could have gone deeply into spiritual realization by losing their identity, by losing their money, losing their position in this world. It's an incredible opportunity, but unfortunately, probably nobody pointed it out to them.

So let's go back into stillness for just a little while, and then I will ring the bell, and with three times, and that will be the end of our evening meditation. But if you want to stay for a little while longer, take your own time, and stay with it for a little bit longer if you feel like it. Our program continues with session three, rising above thinking in the unconditioned consciousness. Welcome to our live meditation. I'm glad you could make it.

I trust you're okay with stillness. To be okay with stillness, you have to access the stillness within you. Otherwise, it gets uncomfortable. If you experience joy or moments of joy or beauty, aliveness, a sense of aliveness, a loving connection with another human being or a loving connection with another life form. Or if you have any creative idea in your life, or anything creative comes to you, all those things that I just mentioned imply that you have some access already to the stillness inside you.

Because all those things, the joy, the sense of aliveness, the lovingness towards others, the creative impulse, the creative idea, all that comes from that dimension in you. Now, many humans have some access to that dimension. That's why they feel it's good to be alive. And for most humans, that access gets, for long periods of time, covered up again by excessive mind activity. And then it resurfaces again.

It's not recognized usually directly for what it is. It is recognized indirectly. So you may be aware that suddenly you feel a sense of joy and aliveness, or you look at another human being and you feel a deep sense of connection. So what happens there is that dimension arises. You don't recognize it directly.

You recognize it as joy. You recognize it as a loving connection or loving kindness or a creative impulse or a sense of heightened aliveness or the recognition of beauty. You look and, Ah, isn't that beautiful? And in the looking and the recognition of the beauty, you may not realize that what underlies that, that which makes it possible, is that for a moment, there was no thought activity in your mind. A space opened up, and that space, that is the stillness.

And that is why you could recognize the beauty, or that is why you felt the connection with another human. Or a simple aliveness arose within you. So it comes spontaneously to you. There are some humans, quite a few, who almost never experience that opening into the alive stillness. And their lives are truly miserable.

They may not even know that. They may not even know that their lives are miserable. They think it's normal to be continuously immersed in the thinking. Isn't everybody else? Now, a deepening happens when you recognize that stillness directly.

It may happen spontaneously in a situation. You're looking at a tree, and for a moment, there's no thought. There's just the perception and the stillness in the background. So you begin to recognize it directly as the foundation for joy, for love, for also compassion, empathy with another. You can't arrive at empathy through conceptual thinking.

You cannot sense the aliveness of another human being through conceptual thinking. But only thinking needs to subside for a moment. And then the sense of separation that's created by continuous thinking disappears in that moment. So I'm inviting you to enter the stillness. Another way of putting it I'm inviting you to stop thinking without falling asleep.

That's one way, but that's not the way here. And this is the next evolutionary level for humans. Rising above thinking. Not abandoning thinking altogether. Transcending thinking, thinking can still operate much more powerfully, by the way, when it's rooted consciously in the stillness.

Now if you're still thinking, this becomes boring or uncomfortable. If it's not boring or uncomfortable, then you are in that state of freedom from thought. You may sense your

presence, so to speak, the presence that you are, the essence of you. Sense it as a whole body realization. Just a sense of presence throughout the body as you sit here.

And that is a sense of heightened aliveness. And if you choose to look around, still sensing this heightened aliveness in your entire energy field, if you then look around, you see that also whatever you are perceiving feels more alive. Even inanimate objects have a certain beingness. They are they are. Even a table, chair.

Even there, there is some life. They are called inanimate, which means, I suppose, lifeless. But if you look more deeply into the molecular structure of the chair or the table, you would see intense aliveness and intense movement. So at this very moment, the universe, we could say, appearing as you, experiences itself. Of course, that's the truth.

You are not separate from the universe. It's an amazing thing. The universe appearing briefly as what we call a person, a cell within the totality, experiencing itself, both on the level of multiplicity of life forms, which has included everything through perceptions, but also on the deeper level, the universe experiencing itself as the unmanifested underlying life. The manifested is the world of form. The unmanifested is the formless, one life.

Timeless, that which preceded the big bang. That the physicists talk about. The timeless one that did not cease to exist when the universe came into existence, but this timeless one that continues to be at the core of every life form. That which gave birth to the universe did not cease to exist by giving birth to the universe. Exist is the wrong word because it doesn't exist.

Because exist means to stand out. Ex to is out Latin. To stand, ex ist means to stand out. So that's all life forms exist. But the one unmanaged life does not exist because it doesn't stand out.

It's in. It is, you could say. It's being, but not existence. No, everything that exists has being. Being is at the core of each thing, the unmanifested, timeless one life.

Don't think about this. I'm not using this so that you conceptually arrive at some conclusion, but for you to experience within yourself that this one timeless unmanifested life that precedes the big bang is the very cause of who you are. And it's absolutely still. And it's absolutely alive. And it's absolutely empty and absolutely full.

And it's you. It's I, the one I, appearing as many I's and yous. Now you can only really become comfortable with the continuous flux of life forms that come and go and are born and die, are born and die. You can only really become comfortable with that when you are aware of the core of yourself as the timeless stillness. Otherwise, the continuous birth and death around you is upsetting.

The continuous gain and loss and birth and death and the continuous coming and going and change. There's no foothold. And we have the two dimensions expressed beautifully in very

ancient Greek philosophy. I may have mentioned before, Heraclitus, Heraclitus says you cannot step into the same river twice because of this continuous flux. It's not this, it's different water.

It's it's pantare is the Greek. Everything flows. Everything is subject to continuous change and metamorphosis, everything around you, he said. That's the basis of his philosophy, five hundred BC. And then came another philosopher, Parmenides, I believe, who said nothing ever changes.

It's all an illusion. And he's right too, they're both right, of course. Heraclitus talks about the manifested world. Parmenides talks about the unmanifested one life. What the Buddha I don't know whether the Buddha actually used that term, but I think he probably did.

Or whether it comes, it's a later, sometimes hard to tell in Buddhism scriptures, whether they go as far back as the actual Buddha teaching. The unborn is a Buddhist term, meaning that which is prior to existence, the timeless one, the unborn within you. So the wonderful thing is the heart of the universe, this vast incomprehensible thing that you see at the tiniest fraction of when you look at the stars at night. What you see is a tiny, tiny fraction of what's there. And even that's not just tiny because you only see a few thousand stars out of billions and billions and billions, but also tiny because of the limitations of your what your senses can perceive.

The heart of it all, the core of it all, although on the outer level, you seem pretty insignificant, and me, we look pretty insignificant when we see the vastness of the universe. But there is something within you that transcends the world of form. And that is why the secret of the universe is in you. And obviously, you can't comprehend it conceptually. But there's a realization there.

And it's only there that there's deep peace. That's the only place where you can find true peace. The realization easily becomes obscured the moment you believe that you, the person, that you as the person, are important. You are important, more than important, but not as the person. The person is a temporary appearance in form.

For example, you become important in your own eyes when you sit in judgment of other people, places, situations, or even yourself. So to find the place of power within you, it's almost paradoxical. All deep truths, when they're expressed in words, are paradoxical. If it's not paradoxical, be careful it's not the truth. But, of course, the mind prefers it not to be paradoxical.

To find the power within you, you need to realize your own nothingness. And only if you realize that you are nothing, then there's the power. And since it's a paradox, I'm not going to explain that further. But I'll say it again. When you realize your own nothingness, then you realize the power at the core of your being.

And of course, that's the egoless state, the realization of one's own nothingness. That's the end of the ego, which does not mean that you go around declaring your own nothingness, because then you're somebody again who has attained nothingness. And really, if you're interested in Buddhism, what I've just been I've been pointing to, that's the real meaning of what the Buddha

pointed to, the Nirvana. That is the nothingness, which is the realization of that is the aim of the Buddha's teaching. It's also the aim of the teaching of Jesus, although it's come down to us in a somewhat more distorted way.

Because the people who were recording it didn't quite get it. And yet, some of it is still has come across in such statements as deny thyself. Misunderstood mostly. Deny thyself means recognize your own nothingness. Recognize the illusion of what you thought was the self, me.

Triumphant me or miserable me, doesn't matter, me, complaining me, unfairly treated me. So as we sit here in just a simple, still presence, that also is the denying of yourself. Because in that still, simple presence, the self or the person, where is it? Shh, it's gone. It's just the light of consciousness.

And as you go about your life, you as the so called person still operates in the world of form. But you don't need to go around trying to strengthen that dimension of yourself, the form. That's the ego's reason for being there, is to strengthen that. So the person becomes transparent, so to speak. And more and more you operate as the presence behind the person when you do things, perceive things.

So your life becomes no longer a manifestation of your conditioning, but something arises, the deeper intelligence that's unconditioned comes through you. Thank you. Welcome to our meditation. An interesting thing to notice as you sit there or rather here, is whether the usual voice in your head, which is the term I sometimes use to refer to your thought processes. Thinking, thinking, thinking.

Whether the usual voice in in your head is still very active or whether it's beginning to subside and is replaced, to put it like that, by a sense of spacious presence, which is a very different state of consciousness from the usual state of thinking. The great opportunity to become aware of that spacious presence, which, of course, is awareness itself, is to notice in yourself that whenever I'm not speaking, like now, you're not thinking, if it works for you as it should. So in the gaps between words, between sentences, There's an opportunity for you to access that presence in which you are conscious but not thinking. You're not only conscious, You're much more conscious in this stage than in the usual thinking state. You're much more alert.

More fully here and now, and ultimately, also more fully yourself. Not the historical self that you usually identify with, you and your story, me and my story, the sense of identity derived from your life situation, which is also a story, but a deeper sense of self, much more real. To sense the beingness that you are, the I am, the presence, the consciousness, the awareness. It's very satisfying to enter that dimension, Or let's put it this way, to allow that dimension to arise and realize that is who essentially you are. It's very satisfying.

It liberates you from the personality, which can still operate and does still operate in your life, but it no longer defines who you perceive yourself to be who you are. But something else also happens as you become more familiar with presence and allow it into your life more often. The

otherwise very dense and cumbersome personality. Gradually becomes transmuted, becomes, one could say, transparent so that the light of consciousness can shine through it. And gradually, a very deep shift happens in you, more and more you become the unconditioned consciousness.

In other words, as the personality no longer controls everything you say and do, personality, of course, is the conditioned mind, conditioned thinking. As the personality no longer controls what you do, something else arises and that presence begins to run your life. And eventually there are only remnants left of that personality, enough for you to function very well on that level in this world. And nobody who is not present would even perhaps notice that you are not a personality anymore. Another word for personality is self.

The self that Jesus talked about, that the Buddha talked about. The self that the Buddha described as the fundamental delusion, And that Jesus talked about when he said, deny thyself. What does that mean? Deny thyself. It means it is implied that the self is not ultimately real, and you recognize its unreality, and then self is denied.

So it means recognize the unreality of the self. If it were real, why would you want to deny it? So when he says deny it, the implication is that it is not real. A false sense of self, a limiting sense of self. And whatever you think and do on the basis of this limiting sense of self brings conflict and suffering.

You project limitation into everything you do and say and think. You create separation continuously through the false sense of self, which is a conceptualized sense of self. And as you sit here, Perhaps something within you responds powerfully to this and enjoys the arising presence. It's also possible that the personality in you comes back up and does not like what's happening here. That's the conditioned self.

So when you become restless or irritated or suddenly switch off completely and start thinking about your problems, or even when you have thoughts in your head that says, I have no idea what he's talking about. That's the conditioned self or the personality which does not like what's happening here. Because what's happening here is ultimately Voluntary self annihilation, which is not really scary, because if the self were real, it would be scary. But since the self is ultimately not real, self annihilation is the end of a delusion. And if your mind is saying, I don't understand what he's talking about, of course you don't, because you can't really comprehend this conceptually, although I'm using words, which are concepts.

But you cannot understand this through concepts. So why are we using words and concepts? The words and concepts point beyond themselves. They are pointers. They are not it.

In the same way that the map is not the territory. And as the Buddhists say, the finger pointing to the moon is not the moon. So let's use another pointer as the personality subsides here and now. Something more essential emerges, an essence, the essence of who you are. Some philosophers have used the term being to talk, to describe it, to point to it.

And being which you experience as the feeling or the sense of I am, your very beingness or essence. Being is the one thing, of course it's not a thing. You're just using words. It's the one thing that you can be absolutely sure about. The only thing that is beyond doubt in your life, the only thing whose reality is beyond doubt.

Everything else could be a dream or an illusion. Whatever you perceive could be a dream, an illusion. You don't know that it's not a dream or an illusion. Because when this meditation comes to an end, then it evaporates into the so called past. And everything that happens quickly dissolves, dissolves, dissolves.

The same way that a dream comes to an end when you wake up. Except that this dream seems to go on and on replaced by another and another. If it is a dream. But something, what is it then that cannot be doubted? That there is a consciousness in which, if it is a dream, whether it's a reality or a dream, doesn't matter, in which it arises, in which it is known, the light in which it appears.

So your presence cannot be doubted. Whatever happens in that presence can be doubted. But for it to happen, there must be a presence. And of course, I say to your presence, it's not your presence. It's the one universal presence, consciousness.

I particularly welcome those of you who are getting tired of their personality, that cumbersome thing, that weight you carry around and creates the same old stuff again and again. It's a good point to reach to become tired of yourself. That is sometimes misperceived. And then you think you're tired of the world, you're tired of living, you're tired of, that's a misperception. What you're really tired of is the self and the world that it creates or seems to create out there.

With the same old conflict, the same old problems, or different problems, but basically the same deep down. Same old thoughts in your head again and again. The same complaints. Oh, dear. So the spiritual path, there are many practices you can use in order to access the dimension of presence, which is the spiritual dimension.

But the most direct practice that immediately accesses that dimension, We could call that surrender. What is that? It is to offer no resistance or opposition to whatever arises in the present moment. Whatever happens, whatever arises, whatever people say or do to become one with the is ness of the present moment. The present moment always already is the way it is.

There's no doubt about that. Whatever form this moment takes, it is as it is. And if internally then you give up opposing, which is the normal state associated with dense personalities, instead of opposing internally what is getting upset, getting angry, arguing with what is either just in your head or out aloud, telling people what they should have done or should be doing, what are not doing, what it should be like, what it isn't like, what I should be doing, what I'm not doing, I should be whatever the whatever form the opposition takes. And I mentioned a few minutes ago, those of you who are getting tired of the old personality, and of course, this is part of the old

personality, the way in which it interacts with people and events and places. It's not usually pleasant.

There's always some resistance, always something not good enough, always something missing here and now. Wherever you go, the structure stays with you, goes with you. So you recognize that that's an important part of the false self that lives through opposition to what is. It strengthens itself through that sense of separation, separating itself from what's going on, condemning it, judging it, and people. And then you realize, what happens if I just accept that whatever arises in the present moment, say, oh, that's what is.

You can still take action, but the foundation is acceptance, surrender. And then immediately, the false self can't really operate anymore. And something else comes in, which is essence, which is awareness, which is consciousness itself. So the most fundamental spiritual practice is surrender. So that internally, you're one with what is.

And immediately, you are a spiritual master Because that's all a master. A master does not necessarily have more knowledge than you. You may have much more knowledge than a spiritual master. But the master lives in alignment with the is ness of the present moment. That's all.

And that's where the power arises. Because when you're aligned with the is ness, that inner spaciousness opens up, essence is there, and that is the power that then moves through you and can become a thought. It can express itself in form through a thought, an action, a movement, something you do or make in many ways, or just as an emanation. That is true power. But it's not your power.

It's universal power. And you become one with it. Thank you. Our program continues with session four, the dimension of being and stillness within. Welcome, and I wish you success in all your endeavors.

Do what you can, but don't expect ultimate satisfaction through what you do. Or what you achieve through the doing. It can give you temporary satisfaction, a feeling of increased aliveness, a stronger sense of identity, of being somebody, a feeling of expansion on the outer level, A certain satisfaction which comes with having overcome obstacles, generated inner resources that perhaps you didn't know you had until you were faced with these obstacles. That's all good. But the sense of satisfaction is not a lasting one.

As long as you know that, it's fine, because satisfaction ultimately, true satisfaction is not arrived at through doing or whatever you achieve through the doing, dissatisfaction, which we could also call happiness, joyous aliveness, whatever, comes from being rather than doing. So if you do and do and do but forget to be, then you encounter frustrations one after the other. But what do I mean when I say forget to be? How can you forget to be? The forgetfulness of being is to overlook continuously a dimension in you that's always there.

But in the case of most people, never realized. So our meditation here, of course, is all about being, going into that dimension within. That is formless and timeless, that dimension of consciousness. Where you really step back from thinking, because all thinking is also a kind of doing, where you step back from thinking, another way of putting it, rise above thinking, And realize beyond all the doing and the successes and failures and conditions and situations of your life and beyond your usual sense of self based on your past, there is something else in you, and it is that which is continuously overlooked. And it's very hard to put it into words because every word is a thought.

It has become a sound, so it's never it. You can only know what I'm talking about by realizing that dimension in yourself, which is, by the way, the most important thing in your life, to realize that. You can only realize it for yourself in the present moment. To know that you are, I am, consciously, to know the beingness that you are. And by know, I don't mean intellectual or conceptual knowing, but a direct realization.

You don't know the apple by talking about it or describing it or even painting it. You can only know the apple by biting into it. So in that sense, you can only know that in the present moment, the realization of beingness, becoming aware of your very being, make it conscious. It was always there, is always there, but had been overlooked in all the doing, which includes thinking, becoming aware of your essential beingness. You cannot understand what that means conceptually, but only directly.

So if you understand what I'm talking about, then you're there. So let's step back from thinking, don't need it right now. And when you don't remember through thinking who you are on that level of mind, what is it that remains? Let's say, at this moment, if you're not thinking, a space opens up within you, and you don't remember your past because all your past consists of is thoughts. And when you're thinking, you don't remember your problems, because really, also problems are thoughts.

So what is left when that space opens up? There is something left. But what, you cannot really call it anything, because it seems to be a nothingness from the point of view of the thinking mind. But what is beyond doubt is, what's left and is beyond doubt is that you are. There is a presence there, and you are that presence.

And that presence has no form. And that's the most amazing realization, is that beyond the person that you are, more fundamentally, you are that underlying presence. And in that presence, you are nobody in particular. You are not something that is defined. And that is the source of true satisfaction, to know yourself as that which is beyond form.

And to some people, that comes not through a spiritual teaching. It can come when the forms of their lives are destroyed. Life does that periodically. It creates and destroys forms. When there's loss in your life, and sometimes what's left when you lose everything is that sense of beingness, of just a conscious presence.

Suddenly, in amazement, you, as the conscious presence, not as a person, are looking at the world. And you're amazed how lovely it is when you don't look at the world through the eyes of the person, which is thought and past. And that is the remembrance of being. There was a spiritual teacher in early the early twentieth century, Gurdjieff, who called it self remembering. And he would sometimes interrupt his students when they were doing things, talking amongst each other or engaged in this or that kind of doing, and he would suddenly shout, Stop.

And everybody had to freeze. And in that moment, the stop signal was meant for them to remind them of the possibility of remembering that deeper level of who they are, where thought subsides and all that's left is the presence that you are. It's not a question of living either in that connectedness with being or in the doing that is normal existence in this world. It's not eitheror, but both fuse merge together So that even while you do things and even while you think, there's still an underlying awareness of presence, of that spaciousness within. And it is that which brings about the possibility of, yes, doing, if necessary, with an intensity of energy, but at the same time, with a detachment.

So you do, but you are not in the grip of the doing. You think, but you're not in the grip of thinking. You may have emotions, but you are not possessed by them. There is an awareness of that inner spaciousness beyond the awareness of your presence, or presence we could call it, it's not yours, it's just how we use language. There's a presence there and you are that presence.

And that presence is essentially what is traditionally called divine presence. It is the light of the world. It is the light of consciousness. Perhaps it is not absolutely right to say this is God, but it is the light of God because God is absolutely ineffable. God is beyond anything that we could say, talk about.

So that presence is very much like the light of the sun. That's why we sometimes use that expression. In some sense, the light of the sun is the sun. The light of the sun is still connected to the sun. It's an emanation of the sun.

But it's not the sun that incredible, seemingly inexhaustible energy that gives off itself for billions of years, for millions of billions. Because God is infinitely more than the sun, but in our sense perceived universe, the analogy we can find for God is just call it the sun. That's why in traditional societies, there was sun worshiping. Of course, there's far more to the sun also than we know, but that's another story. So there's the sun and there's the light of the sun, and so the presence is the light of the one, the God.

And you are that. And there is the your true identity, which is not a comparative identity as the usual sense of identity is, egoic. You're not you don't have a sense of who you are because you're not that. You're not You don't get a sense of identity through differentiating yourself from others. It is deeper than that.

It's not comparative. It's also A deep sense of What the ego always looks for, a sense of worthiness. So who you are beyond form is very precious, and you know that, you sense that. And when that's present in you, you know it's there. You sense it sometimes more strongly than other times.

Then you are detached, as I said, from what you do. There's a spaciousness in which you do things. You're also detached from the outcome that you want to achieve. If it works, fine. If it doesn't work, that's fine too.

Loss and gain, success and failure. When you succeed or you gain, yes, you are pleased. You can go out and celebrate, but it's not it's no longer that artificial high that it gives you when it lets all you know. And then you you suddenly feel invincible, and you've made it, and you go, well, yeah. Just wait.

Wait a week or a year or three years or five years, and you'll see that the very success has turned into problems or dissatisfaction or leaves you. So when things are going fine, it's fine. It's you're pleased. And when you lose or you fail, there's the same detachment there, because you're in touch with something deeper than the world of form, so you're not devastated at loss or failure. It doesn't destroy your sense of who you are in your essence.

If you're out of touch with being, then of course it does destroy your sense of who you are. And some people commit suicide when they lose all their money, or when they lose their reputation. They commit suicide because they feel their very sense of identity has been diminished to such an extent that they can't live anymore. But if you are connected with a deeper level, the transcendent, as I sometimes call it, the I am that is beyond form, then what often happens at some great loss, you actually feel it more strongly. You sense who you are beyond form more strongly when you lose forms.

And that's an amazing experience, an amazing realization. Stepping back from thinking, from remembering who you are on the level of form, and sensing who you are on a more essential level, a small essential dimension right now. And this is the only thing that is beyond any doubt. I am. Everything else may be an illusion.

You may be dreaming right now. In some sense, you are. And in that dream, let's say you are dreaming, you dream of looking at a screen, and a person says, Remember that you are. You couldn't have the dream if you were not there having the dream. The consciousness, the light in which the dream appears, there couldn't be a dream without a presence to whom the dream appears.

You are that. So it's the one thing that is real and beyond any doubt. Philosophers have been looking for it. What's the one thing that cannot be doubted? And has, of course, the famous Descartes, philosopher Descartes mistook thinking for that.

But if he had gone one step further, well, then he would have realized it's not thinking. It's not not not I think, therefore I am. It's I know that I am, therefore I am. I sense the I am ness that I am. I sense the presence that I am.

And there's no duality. The duality appears when I formulate a sentence. I sense the presence that I am, subject and object. But really, the presence senses itself. So it's called self realization, The transcended self, not the egoic self.

Welcome. I just want to remind you that we are not here to do anything. We are here to, one could say, experience something rather than do something. And what we are here to experience, and even that's not quite right, I'll come to that in a minute, what we're here to experience is very subtle, but very powerful. Whatever name we give that reduces it.

It's not that. It's very vast. For the time being, let's just call it stillness. Now, when I said, We're here to experience something, that's not absolutely right, but whenever we use language, we are bound to falsify that which goes far beyond concepts. It's not so much that we're here to experience something as to find that which underlies all experience, a dimension that is deeper than any experience, becoming aware of that within yourself.

So some of you may have written down or have in your mind goals you want to achieve in life, and that's good, it's unlikely that achieving stillness will figure prominently as one of your goals. Or even number one. And yet it's the most important thing in your life. But it's a good thing that it's not on your list of goals to be achieved, because if you make it into a goal to be achieved, it implies that you need the future to achieve stillness. Which is of course true for all other goals, but not for that which we call stillness, temporarily, we'll just call it for the time being stillness.

If you make it into a goal to be achieved, you place it into the future, and you'll never find it. Because it's inseparable from the present moment, the now. The now that usually people are not aware of as an actual presence. And here we have another pointer we could use instead of stillness, and that is presence. And as the word implies, presence is inseparable from the present, the now.

Now for most people, yet the the now is not a living realization. They are only aware of what happens in the now. And even that's not quite right. They're not really aware of it. They are reactive towards it, and they are identified with it.

They're identified with their thoughts that arise. They are reactive to what happens outside. So I'm here just talking a little bit, giving you pointers with every sentence, every word is really a pointer towards that. And I trust that as we sit here together, giving up the idea that we are here to do something, as we sit here together, A realization arises within you that is the living presence within. The thinking mind stops for a moment, and there's just spacious awareness.

Stillness. You haven't gone to sleep, you've become still without falling into dreamless sleep, without falling into dreams, to just something has arisen that usually you would have

overlooked. And our meditation here, if we want to call it that, is to become aware of this space within another pointer, the stillness, this space. Becoming totally at ease with the present moment, a very rare state for most humans. Usually, they're only at ease when some desire has just been fulfilled, and then they're at ease for a little while, a few minutes, perhaps.

Or they are at ease because they are so tired. They're moving towards sleep. So I'm here to lead you into that realization of inner stillness, of that dimension within, lead you through words, which are only pointers, and through the demonstration of presence, which you can sense if you pay attention to the underlying stillness that is here as I speak. Behind the words, between the words. Tune into that.

Nothing personal in that. Nothing to do with this person. And as you tune into that, the same dimension arises within you, which again has nothing to do with that person that you think you are. So there is a dimension that transcends the person. It's in this person, and it's in that person.

The dimension that transcends the personal and the person and everything to do with the person, the personal history, the personal problems, life situation, the ups and downs of the life situation. There will always be there, the ups and downs of the life situation. But the miracle is finding the transcendent dimension within you, without which life cannot be a pleasant experience, not for long. It cannot be satisfying, not for long, never for long. So without the realization of the transcendent dimension, the formless, spacious stillness, Nothing will satisfy you.

It's frustrating. Life is very frustrating without that dimension. You haven't found it. But of course, the dimension is there in everyone. It's not something that you need to achieve.

You can't achieve it, let alone achieve it in the future. You can discover it here and now within. It's lurking there underneath all the doing, underneath all the thinking. It's always there, but completely ignored by most people. If you're comfortable with theistic terms, you could say God is always present, but completely ignored by most people.

Because if God has any meaning, it is the transcendent dimension of life. It, transcend means it is beyond whatever arises in life, beyond thought, beyond physical forms, beyond form. It transcends form. It is beyond past and future, it transcends time, it has nothing to do with time. It is presence, eternal presence.

And presence, eternal presence or eternity, is not some weird, abstract philosophical concept. It can be, and it points to, a living realization. So the most precious thing to find in life is that there's stillness inside you, always. You just have to pay attention to it. But then the strange thing is that when you become aware of stillness, you realize that the awareness and the stillness are not two, but one.

So it's only when we use language we say, I'm now I'm aware of stillness. You put it into language, so when you're aware of stillness, there is a knowing where concepts are not needed, words are not needed. There is no duality, really. It's only when you translate it into words, there's a duality, and you say, I'm aware of stillness. But what really happens is that awareness and stillness are a single realization.

There is no subject and object in this realization. When we talk about it, it sometimes seems that there is a subject. I am aware of stillness. I can feel the stillness inside me. When you put it into words, that's how it's there's subject and object.

But when you look more deeply beyond words, you see that there's not me as an entity who is aware of stillness as something in me, it's only when we use language and that duality appears. When I'm aware of stillness, really, the awareness and the stillness are one. And the I am, when you say I am, aware of stillness, you could say it now, in this moment. I am aware of stillness. That's through words.

It's not the actual truth of it. It's not quite it's not how it is. Because the I am, the awareness, and the stillness are all one. So when you say I'm aware of stillness, it really means I am aware of I am. I am aware of the I am that I am.

There's a hint of that in the Old Testament. When God is asked, What's your name? God says, I am that I am. The essence of all identity is I am. So you could say, instead of I'm aware of stillness, you can say, I'm aware that I am.

Or you could say, the I am that I am is aware of itself. So instead of saying, I'm aware of stillness, you can also say, the awareness that I am, that I am is a way of itself. Because I am and awareness is one. And I am and awareness and stillness are one. The stillness is aware of itself.

The awareness is aware of itself. Duality collapses in that realization. Because duality applies to the world of form. That which underlies the world of form, the transcendent, the divine, if you're comfortable with that word, transcends duality, and because duality is the beginning of multiplicity of billions of forms. But what is the source of the billions of life forms?

The one, the source out of which all life forms arise. And all life forms are an emanation arising from the one source of all life, the one life that transcends all forms of life, is beyond all forms of life. The one. The alpha and the omega, the beginning and the end, the timeless, eternal one. And that is not some abstract philosophical concept, although sometimes it becomes that when people only talk about it.

It's a realization within yourself because the one is within you. It is the core, the space that is the essence of who you are. The source of all life. The timeless source of all life. So we could say then, we're here to realize the I am that I am.

So let's stay with that for a moment. I am. Can you become aware of the fact that you are? That's what it is. This is one way of realizing that stillness.

Can you become aware of the fact that you are, I am? Really, we're talking about becoming aware of the being, to be I am. Your presence. The presence that underlies the person at this moment? Can you sense that, feel that we don't have words really that are adequate?

The spaciousness of being, the stillness of being. And then you get a sense that without needing to remember your past, you get a very strong sense of the essence of your being, the beingness of who you are. Without remembering your past, so your past has very little or virtually nothing to do with who you actually are, where where your sense of identity arises, the sense of presence, of aliveness. So I am. How do you know that you are?

Well, I know it. You can't go beyond that. It knows itself. You know yourself. As the very presence, which is not an object in your experience, it's the eternal subject of all experience.

And that eternal subject of all experience knows itself. But not conceptually. It doesn't know anything about itself. It knows itself directly. And that is the transcendent dimension within you, or the divine within you.

And then you realize that everything that you perceive in the world of form is an emanation of that and is also divine. But you don't know that everything in the world of form is also divine unless you find that dimension within yourself. And only from the realization of that dimension as a continuing underlying sense of presence or stillness, then you can look at the world of forms and read and sense the, the divine in each form. But you can only sense the divine in each form because you sense it in yourself. Only through the divine in yourself can you sense the divine in each form, in each other, other human being.

Including all the human beings that have no idea of the divine within themselves that you encounter. And any human being that has no idea of the, the essence of who they are, are, to a greater or lesser degree, mad. So this is the normal humans you encounter in the world. There's an overlay of madness, but in essence, they are divine. So that's what you see.

That's what you sense when you interact with them, and that what you truly relate to in others. You can only relate to that in others because you can sense that in yourself. So to put in very simple terms, there is a stillness in you as you you even when you talk to people. And that stillness in you senses that underneath the mad mind of the other human being, nothing personal in that, there is also that dimension. And that's what you sense in the other.

But he only senses it because in the background of who you are, you can sense an alive stillness. While you listen, while you even while you speak, there's still an awareness of the I am, the stillness, the presence. Now many people are worried about saving the world. And the only thing that can save a world that is otherwise somewhat insane is for humans. To come to

that self realization, the realization of who they are, in essence, the realization of the divine within.

And that's what will save the world. Because whatever you do then is imbued with that realization. And in the absence of that realization, as a continuing knowing in the background, continuing sensing of presence, in the absence of that, whatever you do, no matter how good your intentions are, will have unforeseeable consequences, repercussions, and will create new problems. Let's go back for a moment to I am, aware of the stillness within. Those three words, I am, aware of the stillness, are all one.

The I am is the awareness. The awareness is the stillness. The I am is the stillness. The stillness becomes aware of itself. God becomes aware of itself.

Here and now. Through this form, through this form. Our program continues with session five, abiding in inner stillness. Welcome to our meditation. The focus of our meditation is inner stillness.

What happens outside doesn't really matter so much. Stillness is just a word, a pointer. To most people, it means absence of noise. And in that sense, stillness could be called a negative pointer. It points to the absence of something.

But it doesn't really refer to the absence of noise. Even the absence of inner noise, although it is true that when the inner noise stops, there is stillness. But every pointer we use is not really it. It's not quite right ever. It reduces that to which it points to something we think we can understand.

So it's much more than the absence of something, although as a pointer that works. Another word for stillness is presence, and that's a positive pointer. By implication, presence points to the presence of something. The presence of what? All you can say here is the presence of presence.

So there are two levels, one could say to who you are. On the one hand, on one level, you are the presence of certain things, the existence of certain things. You are the existence of the body, the existence of sense perceptions, the existence of emotions, the existence of thoughts. So we can call that the presence of something, that's you as a person. And here we are not concerned with that.

We're concerned with who you are beyond the person, that deeper level. And we are here together, a few thousand people perhaps, in different parts of the planet, going beyond the individual persons, personalities, to a deeper level of being, and that's our meditation. And I am speaking, the words point to it. The words, of course, are not it. The silence, the stillness, the presence, which cannot be perceived with the senses is what matters here.

So there's nothing for you to do except be who you are beyond the personality, and realize there is a stillness in you that has nothing to do with the personality and its problems, because a large part of your personality consists of your problems. As you access the deeper level of stillness or where you just sense, as I sometimes put it, your own presence. It's not your own, but let's just put it this way, where you sense your own presence, or rather, when you sense the presence that you are, you are that presence before you become this or that person, there is a presence, an aliveness, there's a light of consciousness, in which the person arises, but the light of consciousness itself is not a person, it transcends the person, it is not separate from it. The light assumes a certain form and becomes a person, in the same way that when you watch a movie, there's a light, a projector light, and the ways in which the light is obstructed by the film, and those obstructions of the light, not never total obstructions because then you wouldn't see anything, partial obstructions of the light, and that becomes the movie, the characters, the events, and so on.

That's a little analogy, and normal life isn't really that much different. So if you only know the obstructions to the light of consciousness, the light of God, then you are trapped on the level of problems and drama and difficulties, anxieties, regrets, past, future, me, me. But here, we become aware of the presence, not the presence of something in us that would make it into some formal thing again, but more simply the presence of presence. So the presence underlies the words that I speak, it underlies the words that you hear. And so I am inviting you to be aware of that in you that underlies the sense perceptions and the thoughts.

We could call that the essence of who you are that transcends the person. That's the most important realization in your life. But it seems to be still a secret because nobody very few seem to know about it, And many are not interested yet until existence as the person only becomes increasingly frustrating, both for the individual and for the collective on the planet, societies, civilizations, where the transcendent dimension is missing completely. Nothing no individual or civilization can remain sane for long without it. There's an increasing madness.

If that is all you know. And the presence, the realization of presence frees you from bondage to the person, the personality, with all its little concerns that keep it busy all day long. And on a larger scale, the collective Realize that the concerns of the collective that you hear through the media and so on, may be relatively important, but ultimately, they are not. Just as your problems, which sometimes are related to the problems of the collective, for example, now in times of a recession and so on, Your problems too are ultimately not that important. It certainly won't be important in fifty, sixty years' time.

To anybody, and not to you, because you as the person probably won't be there anymore. That's quite soon. I suggest you visit a graveyard from time to time and look at the gravestones with its names on them. All these people thought that their problems were incredibly important. Their successes were important, incredibly important, their failures were very important, and none of this suddenly matters.

Fifty years later, all gone. And another generation is there with the same beliefs, totally absorbed in their life, their so called life, But without connection to the transcendent dimension, they're not really fully alive. And they're not really enjoying life except as temporary passing sense pleasures, a high followed by a low, And on that level only, life, so called life, will always disappoint you. Even when you achieve change that you wanted, which is fine, but it cannot give you real satisfaction for long. Only discovering the transcendent in you can do that.

So real satisfaction is realizing who you are beyond that level of person, form we could call it. Realizing who you are sounds as if you suddenly understood something, it's not you can't really understand it, but you can it's being it rather than understanding it. So you'll notice when you join me here in the state of not thinking, just being present. At that time, something other than the person with its past and future and concerns has arisen, something other than the usual person. So the person has stepped aside or receded temporarily, and there's a presence which has no content as such, because it's space.

Let's give a little analogy that's maybe a little bit weird to you, almost humorous. Let's imagine I'm inviting you to imagine that you are a bowl, like a salad bowl or a fruit bowl. There's nothing in it, but you could put things in there, of course. Now, if the bowl wanted to realize its true identity only in terms of the form. It would not have a total understanding of its true identity, even its true purpose, if it only were aware of its own form, even if it's beautiful, because, of course, the essence of the bowl is the space within it.

That's why it's there, why it has come into being. So the bowl would only gain a full understanding of itself if it were aware of itself, not only as a form, but it would also realize that space is actually more essentially who I am than the form around it. You can have the same analogy for room. Think that you are a room. Am I and then including the furniture.

So on the level of form only, you would think of yourself as consisting of the walls and ceiling and floor, which would be the, in this analogy, the physical body. And then you would also think of yourself as the furniture in the room, which in this analogy would be all your thoughts and feelings, emotions and sense perceptions, all the things that happen, the stuff in your mind. And you would be missing the essence, which is the space of any room. The essence of any room is the space. So if you are a room and only aware of yourself as the floor, the ceiling, and the walls and the furniture in it, you would have a very limited understanding of yourself.

It's just an analogy, but that's how most humans live with that very limited view or understanding of themselves. So there is an essence to who you are that is formless, and that is why we are here in between the words, behind the words that I speak and that you hear, that essence is there in you, but it applies not just to you, the entire universe has a formless essence, and that is the, in Indian philosophy, the essence in you would be called atma, and the external essence is brahman, God within and God without. God has no form. God is the only thing that has no form, and therefore, of course, God is not a thing or a being. God is being, but not a being.

If you believe that God is a being rather than transcendent being, then you are trapped in a religion where the transcendent is missing, and you would have been trapped in an ideology. But you can have a religion where the transcendent is there if you realize that God is not a personality, God is not an entity somewhere in space or time, not a being, but being itself, which pervades the entire universe, and it's in you. You are it. You can have that realization with a religion. You can have that realization even without the belief structures of a religion.

It's the spiritual dimension. It's a joy to sense that it's liberating. And then you go through life knowing, not just on the level of thought, a deeper knowing, Knowing, let's put it like this for a moment, nothing that words can say is absolutely true, just pointers. Knowing that there's two of you, so to speak. When I say so to speak, it means don't take that as an absolute statement.

It's a helpful pointer. You can go through life knowing that there's two of you, the person, the form, including all your psychological makeup and so on, and the essence, the formless, timeless presence, of presence, consciousness, whatever. And let's see, the master, the spiritual master knows that and believes that, and that's that is that mastery, to realize that in your life, that's why you are here. Wonderfully liberating, knowing as a direct and immediate realization that there's the person that still operates in the world, but you can sense the presence, the stillness in the background, sometimes even in the foreground. And it doesn't say anything, of course, but it changes also slowly the way in which the person operates in the wild.

Because the person who only knows that, when you know yourself only as the person, you don't operate very well in this world. You create a lot of problems and conflict for yourself and others. You contribute to the soap opera of daily existence, or the drama of daily existence. But when the dimension of essence is there, it gradually changes the way in which the person relates to others, interacts, responds to situations, a more intelligent way of living in this world, and also a loving way of living in this world, a kind way of living in this world, which the person alone is not really capable of. It tries sometimes.

Ultimately, even a more effective way of being in the world in what you do, because you don't create any longer unnecessary obstacles, which is what the person, if there's nothing else, does in the absence of realization, Our program continues with session six, being in thoughtless awareness. This is our evening meditation, which means more silence than words, hopefully, because you never know what comes out of this mouth. I don't. If you feel at any point you want to close your eyes, it's fine. There's a common belief that when you meditate, your eyes need to be closed, but they don't need to be closed.

It's wonderful to realize you can meditate with your eyes open. Of course. What do I mean by meditate? Quite simply, being in thoughtless awareness. That's meditation.

And as I speak and as you listen, you can be in thoughtless awareness. Just a presence. Why not? You don't have to be always a heavy person carrying the baggage of past and a mind full of stuff. There is another way of being in this world, and that's to be the presence, and this is all meditation.

And even as I speak, you can be the presence because there's nothing to think about. What I'm saying is so simple that you cannot figure it out by thinking about it because there's nothing to figure out. You can't work. What is he saying? What he's saying exactly what he's saying?

You can't say, Oh, I'm trying to understand what he's saying. There's nothing to understand. Stepping out of thinking does not involve further understanding through thinking. That may be a little insulting, particularly to those of you who are highly educated and identify excessively with the content of your mind. That thinking is not the highest faculty in a human being.

And that is a revolutionary statement that not many people in the mainstream culture would agree with because all they know themselves is as thinking entities. But once you discover that thinking is not the highest because you've touched something, a dimension in yourself that's beyond thinking, that is an evolutionary leap. Even if you fall back into thinking, for a moment you've leaped like the first fish trying to leap out of the sea because they say life has developed in the sea, and trying to crawl on land is you stopping thinking. And then it gets too difficult, then the fish runs back, gets back into the sea. But that analogy, of course, we need to forget now because it's not going to take us several million years as it took to the fishes before they could start walking on land.

If that whole story is true, who knows? It doesn't matter. So as you might have noticed, what I'm talking about is very simple because I'm simply guiding you into presence. That's all. But more important than the words is what's behind and in between the words.

And we could call that spaciousness or we could call that stillness. Doesn't matter what you call it, but you become more aware of the spaciousness than the words, and the spaciousness is within you. It's there at the moment the stream of thinking subsides, and there's only the presence left. If your mind still tends to interfere and take you out of presence, allow the body, your body, to participate in the meditation so that you become present with every cell of the body. Every cell of the body becomes present.

Now somebody might say, please explain what you mean by that. No, I won't. It's too simple for that. Just sense the aliveness in your body. Anywhere where you can feel it first is fine, the hands or the legs or the feet.

And then the entire energy field that pervades the body becomes part of presence. And at first, it seems that you, the consciousness, are observing the inner body feeling. But if you go into it more deeply, you realize that there's no longer a subject, object relationship between you, the presence, and the feeling of the inner body. You, the presence, and the feeling of the inner body merge, and the totality of that becomes the state of presence. So it's no longer an observer and the observed.

There's a merging of the observer and the observed. So that means the entire being becomes aware. And that's a lovely state, peaceful, and then it's fairly easy not to drift off into thinking

tomorrow's breakfast or next week's problems or last year's disappointments, and many other things that thinking is concerned with. My problematic life. Somebody, perhaps it was Carl Jung, I'm not sure, said you cannot solve the problems of this world on the same level of consciousness that created the problems.

So you can't solve your personal problems, which everybody has, unless you rise to a different state of consciousness, which is why we are here. And when you solve your personal problems that a sufficient number of humans do that, then that will affect the world problems. And that's the true how truly you can change the world, or to put it more accurately, how that change can happen through you. Not, it's not you, the doer, who is going to change the world, but it can happen through you. In the meantime, there's nothing wrong.

In fact, it's wonderful to alleviate suffering where you see it in this world, where you feel called upon to help in your immediate environment or elsewhere. That's wonderful thing to do. But the causal level of the world's problems lies in the collective consciousness or unconsciousness of the world. And that is the only place, the consciousness, where deep and permanent change can happen. So that eventually, you don't need to help other humans anymore.

They don't need your help anymore. You can commune joyfully with them. So you deal, of course, with the effects of unconsciousness in this world. There's a lot of suffering, physical and psychological. And your focal point as even as you help others, your focal point needs to be the shift in consciousness.

So the entire body is meditating, so to speak, is present as you sit here. And you can now perhaps easily verify the effectiveness of a meditation question that was one of the favorite meditations of Ramana Maharshi, the Indian sage. And that was the simple question, who am I? He said, just ask yourself that question and go deeply into it and then see what happens. Who am I?

And a little hint, I don't know if he gave that hint. The answer is not in words. The answer is let's see if it comes to you. Who am I? And you need to be, of course, alert and still after the question has been asked so that you can find out.

Who am I? I'll give you another hint. You can't think about it. Then you get confused. And then you will say, I either you'll say, of course, I'm so and so.

Of course, then you you're certain, but you're well below the answer. Or you say, I don't know. I'm so confused now. You're confusing me. That's because you're trying to find an answer through thinking.

Who am I? What remains is just an alertness, an alert space. That's consciousness. Let's call it your consciousness, but it's not yours. That's your consciousness minus the content minus forms.

Who am I? And if you had if somebody were forcing you to give an answer in words, the truthful answer would be, I don't know. Because it is not through any word or concept that you can know who you are. So on the level of words or concepts, you have to say, I don't know. And yet, there is undoubtedly a presence there that has no name and has no content and has no past and no future.

And no problems. Totally intangible, formless. This was what Jesus referred to as the kingdom of heaven. Heaven, the vastness of sky, heaven and sky in some words are the same word in some languages. You had to find some kind of word to describe the spaciousness of that inner state.

So he called it the kingdom in modern terminology, the dimension of the realm of vastness or spaciousness, but it's not the outer spaciousness, it's the inner. But, of course, all words refer to outer things. The kingdom of heaven is within you. And that's why as it has no content and no form, the Buddha called it emptiness. So that is there.

You don't need to sit in meditation to be that, to sense that in the background in in daily life. You practice thoughtlessness. Thoughtless in English has negative connotations, but it shouldn't have. It implies it's unawareness and you don't know what you're doing. But there's a positive here when we use thoughtlessness.

It has a very positive meaning. You've risen above thought. The way it's used in normal culture is you've fallen below thought and you don't know what you're doing. This spaciousness, this inner spaciousness can be there at any time in your daily life. You bring in until it becomes permanent in the background of your being so that no matter what you do and even while you're thinking, there's still something you sense that's deeper than thinking.

So you're no longer lost in thinking. In other words, you are not the slave of the mind anymore. You're not possessed by that entity anymore. And then it functions beautifully. Being here should help you to grow in, as I sometimes call it, presence power.

So as so that this presence arises more through you, in you. So in your daily life, you can suddenly enter a state of spacious awareness in between two actions. For example, Walking from here to there, picking something up, looking out of the window. Five seconds of alert spacious awareness as you're looking at the clouds. Instead of looking out of the window and having some kind of commentary about what you're looking at.

Not another rainy day. You don't need that. And even more beautiful sunshine, you can go beyond that too and just spacious awareness. Five seconds looking out of the window. Getting dressed while you put on your shoes.

Just be alert the alert presence instead of projecting yourself mentally to some future moment. And as I said before, whenever you're waiting for something, a wonderful opportunity for entering that. Go into the body if that will very can very easily take you there or pay attention to

sense perceptions and feel as you pay attention to sense perceptions, feel the presence without which there would be no sense perceptions. You can do that now. That's quite So there's what you see and what you hear.

These are the two predominant sense perceptions here. There's what you see and what you hear. That makes up what I call it, as you might know, the surface of the present moment. All the sense perceptions of the surface of the present moment changes all the time. And then there is the depths of the present moment that does not change, the now that is forever here, totally timeless, that is your presence, that space.

So you are what arises, and more fundamentally, you are the space in which it arises. Ultimately, they're not separate, but we don't know to go into that now. You are the space for whatever arises in that space of consciousness. So content, I call it, is content. The content of your consciousness is sense perceptions, seeing, hearing, smelling, touching.

The content of your consciousness is thoughts. The content of your consciousness is emotions. Those are basically, your life consists of, put these into a pot, Sense perceptions, thoughts, and emotions. Stir. Add a little bit of cayenne pepper.

That's the drama. And whatever else, other spices that you want to add. But basically, that is your life. It the life which changes your life is different from your life and your life and your life. They're all different lives in different worlds, but basically, the basic ingredients of your life and whatever your life situation is are sense perceptions, thoughts, and emotions.

Is there anything else on the surface? No. No. All of that is content. All of that is form.

Now for most people, that's all they know about their lives. They only know their life and themselves as a mixture, and every mixture is somehow different, of sense perceptions, thoughts, and emotions. And that's all there is, as far as they know. What they don't realize is without the light of awareness in which sense perceptions, thoughts and emotions appear, they wouldn't even they couldn't exist. That is the space for them, and that is the consciousness itself.

And that, once you realize that dimension within yourself, the content of your life is of secondary importance. Before, it mattered so much what happened or didn't happen or failed to happen or success or failure that was and you were so miserable when things went wrong, and you you're elated when you fall in love, but, of course, it doesn't last. When you only know content, you get more and more frustrated with life. And and then you realize there is a deeper dimension, and that deeper dimension is who I am, essentially. That is the true I, not the I that identifies with content, forms that arise.

So that is truly the secret of life for humans and others, I suppose, wherever they are on this planet and elsewhere in the galaxy and other galaxies. Because it cannot be that much different

in other places in this galaxy or other galaxies. There will be form and space, both externally. You can look around, and you can always see stuff. In a room, you see the furniture.

If you're outside, you see trees and so on. Or if you look up into space at night, you see stars, most of which are suns, distant suns. And what else do you see? Well, you don't see it, but there's vast spaciousness there. And even in this room, you might not pay attention to it, but this room could not exist if in addition to the furniture in this room and the physical bodies in this room and all the other things in this room and the ceiling floor and the walls of this room, if there were not space.

This space is the essence of this room. You can't say the room. If you describe the room, usually people would write down, give children a school exercise, describe this room, ceiling, walls, floor. What's in this room? That's what I was is that all there is?

Yes. Forgotten anything? No. Except the most important thing, forgot. It's the space.

There's already a beautiful few short verses about this in the ancient Chinese Tao Te Ching, where it says, if you have a vessel or bowl, that which makes it useful is the space within it. It's not the vessel. It's the space that's the essence of it. Those are lines. So in the same way, your life or life anywhere in this galaxy or the most distant galaxy, I can guarantee you that even if they don't have physical bodies, there will be some forms and there will be space in which these forms exist.

So no matter where you look, out there, here, the room, outside, it always applies. There is form, content, and space. And space seems to be infinite. If you look into outer space, you if you try to comprehend, nobody has reached the the end of space. Nobody nobody can does it end anywhere?

That was a problem for me when I was eight or nine years old. I tried to imagine the end of space. You go on and you go on, and and then suddenly, but what's beyond that? And if there is something beyond it, it's not the end. And I asked my father, and he tried also to visual, and he couldn't do it either.

And this is why it's called infinity. Infinity. And another lovely word that's one with it, really, eternity, infinity and eternity. They're really one. I think that Einstein would agree with that.

Time and space, space time continuum. And infinity and eternity are your own essence because what you discover within is the the very foundation for the universe. That spaciousness is the space out of which everything came before the Big Bang. Just timeless, eternal, eternity and infinity, no form. Scientists, they stop there.

They sometimes they try to figure out the big bang, but nobody tries to go before the big bang because you can't. There was no before because there was no time. Can't understand that. You

go mad if you try to understand it. But you can know this experientially within yourself as inner space, just presence.

And as we saw the other day, we talked about the medieval form of spirituality like Saint Francis attempting, not seeking pleasant forms. Saint Francis never sought out. He appreciated when they came, flowers and so on. But not seeking them out. In fact, being very happy with unpleasant forms, almost seeking out unpleasant forms.

And seeking out, like in the story that we heard, the man who went to the city square, sat there in the middle, and got mocked and things thrown at him every day, and he went back every day in an attempt, I would call it he wouldn't have called it that because he used different terminology. In an attempt at self annihilation, the annihilation of the ego. If you go back to the same square where you are where you are mocked and people throw things at you and pull your hair and laugh at you and you go back every day, it is an attempt at inviting the death of the ego. The ego being identification with form, with content. And if you make it so unpleasant of content in your life, the idea behind it is that it forces you into transcendence.

It forces you into going beyond content. And suddenly, you find a deep peace inside, and you don't know where it comes from. And externally, there's the unpleasant conditions, but you have disidentified from them. Thereby, the ego has died, and then whatever terminology used to explain what happens to you then depends on your culture, as this man might have said, the monk. I don't know what he would have said.

I became one with God or the sacredness or infinity, eternal peace. And traditionally, one spiritual path in Christianity is closely related to that, and that is identification with the suffering of Jesus on the cross. So any suffering that you undergo in your mind, you undergo it together with you you're repeating the archetype of the suffering of Jesus. That is how the image of the man on the cross can lead, if you identify with it, can. There's no guarantee, it could mislead you to.

There are lots of ways in which it can go wrong. It can lead to self annihilation of the ego and then to an awakening into the formless, and you're then in whatever terminology you use, you're one with the one, you're one with God, you are self realized, enlightened, whatever you want to use, or you're simply at peace. So that can work too. Most Christians have no idea these days that that can be a spiritual path. So for them they practice a more superficial form of Christianity, mostly fairly superficial.

A few Christians may go deep but many practice it. They don't see the depths in their own tradition and because so many people don't see it anymore, Christianity is now at a dangerous point. Every nothing is forever. Even everything evolves. So Christianity will either deepen or change or disappear.

And even the Pope knows that. He said, pointed to the fact that it was a critical time for a Christian religion. If you are a practicing Christian, this is can still be a viable pass to reaching

that egoless state of oneness with whatever you want to call it. If you're a Buddhist, that can still be a viable path or whatever it is. Or you you may not follow any tradition, and this is for the first time, as far as I know, in the history of humanity, that spirituality arises without belonging to any particular, any one tradition, without rejecting any of the older traditions.

So self annihilation, basically, that's the lies at the basis of Saint Francis. Also practiced by many yogis and sadhus in India who practice extreme austerities and seek out unpleasantness. You don't have to do that. That's why you're here. But if you were not here, there are many other ways.

You could go to India and sit in a cave for twenty years, being stung by mosquitoes, but not minding anymore, and all kinds of bugs come and creep on you. And you a few people will come and feed you. It won't be gourmet food, but that's okay. You don't want gourmet food anymore. You want the worst so that you can disidentify from form, so that life forces you deeper, so that you go beyond all form.

That's the idea behind it. Sometimes it works, and sometimes it doesn't. And if it doesn't work, then you just become more and more lifeless. Have another go next time. But the most rapid way to self annihilation and easier, more pleasant, but you need to be up to it.

You need to your consciousness needs to re have reached a certain level where this becomes a viable path for you, and that is simply the cessation of compulsive thinking, to end compulsive thinking so that you can enter by choice, I would say, and choose when you want to think and don't want to think. And this is why, as I've quoted the wonderful words of the sage, Nisargadatta Maharaj, who defined meditation when they asked him, what is meditation? And in his unique way of speaking, he said, Meditation, it's the radical refusal to harbor thoughts. That's how he spoke. I saw some old videos.

The radical refusal to harbor thoughts. And that stopped some people's minds. I used to quote years ago in talks I haven't in a long time, the Zen master who when asked to explain the true meaning of Zen, which even the monks who had been in the monastery for ten, fifteen, and twenty years didn't understand. Please explain the true meaning of zen, and wherever he went and he was asked that question, he would never give a verbal answer. He would only raise his finger and look at you.

And so the question now would go, did you hear what I said? But a few questioners got it, and that's called satori. Satori is a moment of a flash of enlightenment. It might not last, but it's a flash. Great teaching.

Zen originally came into being because Buddhism had already become burdened with conceptualization and intellectualism. And then Zen represented a renewal, complete doing away with all scriptures, everything, just a direct pointing to the heart of humans or whatever how what was whatever the scriptures later said about it. Direct pointing, no more reference to old ancient scriptures. And you even have stories like the Buddha statues, the Buddha Rupas,

not to venerate them excessively. In fact, if the Zen master got cold in the winter, he would be quite capable of throwing the wooden Buddha statue into the fire to keep so Zen was a very radical thing.

And then over the centuries, it became assumed more form. It some of the power was lost except in a few masters here and there, then in itself or became already also burdened to some extent. But originally, Zen is a wonderful, wonderful teaching. Basically, as you know, it says don't think. That's then.

I just saved you twenty years in the monastery. Let's, just go within for a moment and close our eyes. I'll I will use the bell as a signal to bring you back here, and then we'll finish our meditation. You can go into the body if you like. Our program continues with session seven, the transcendence of no thinking.

I sometimes speak of bringing the transcendent dimension into your life. Without which, your life, no matter what you achieve, is very limited. The transcendent dimension is not an achievement. It's more like a discovery because it's already here. So it's not something you need to get, which would imply future.

But the discovery of something that's already here. It's not something, but we have to use words. And this is about the most important thing. No matter who you are or or what your function is in this world, this is about the most important thing there is. So we are here right now so that you can deepen your access to it.

Or or some of you discover or yourself what it is. Discover it directly. So here today, see if you can Experience yourself as presence rather than as a person. When you experience yourself as presence, we could also say the the presence within you, the presence that you are, that is the transcendence of the person. And the transcendence of the person and the discovery of yourself as presence is here and now.

When you become so alert, so awake, to discover that alertness, that wakefulness in you, that there's no thinking. There are spaces in between thinking of simple alert presence. And the opening up of those spaces or that one space is the transcendence of the person because as that space opens up, you suddenly realize there's a depth to you that you did didn't know before. But you have to have enough courage to go there because you have to give up everything that you thought you knew, all the thoughts that you identified with. So you step into the unknown, in which, one could almost say, you become as nothing.

And I like that English word, you don't have that in other languages. The English word nothing consists of no thing. Thing meaning form, something that has a particular form. And you realize the presence of that which has no form. And as you experience yourself as presence in which there's no thought, just an alert consciousness.

You don't know who you are anymore, and that may require some courage to go there. Some people go there without any spiritual teaching because they just cannot stand who they are anymore. The person and the life that that person creates for them can't take anymore of that suffering, the unhappiness, the conflict, the agony, the negativity that they generate. I can't take anymore. That's a good point to reach too.

At that moment, you have a choice. You can commit suicide. Or preferably, step into the unknown and discover that presence that's deeper than the person, and then live in and through, predominantly in and through that presence. So when you look at something, the presence is looking, not the person. How do you know whether the presence is looking at something or the person?

When you don't interpret mentally what you're looking at, that's presence, but you're very alert. Or you listen to something, but you don't interpret it, there's just the listening and the presence without which there could be no listening. And then in little situations in your life, you discover that it's much more pleasant to be there as the presence rather than as the person. You do perhaps simple routine activities as the presence and a large space without calling things that happen good or bad anymore, because when you call things good or bad, it's the person, the conceptual self, the mind made self. That includes other people.

You don't call other people good or bad anymore. Places, situations. Whenever you fall into good and bad, you are again a person. You lose transcendence. Transcendence is lost, covered up, no longer realized.

It's never really lost, but it seems to be completely lost. And then you're trying to get rid of the, what you called, bad. Well, this doesn't really work. So as long as you call certain people bad, you will continue to meet. Even if you run away or eliminate those people, you'll meet more bad people.

And what you focus on mentally grows. So if you can encounter people, situations, places as a simple presence without taking a position towards them. Allow everything to be in this moment as it is. No, that's the ego doesn't like that. The ego is the mind made self that lives on judgment.

If you relinquish judgment, the ego disappears. Of course, it doesn't want to disappear. But you realize that life becomes a much more pleasant experience without that person continuously judging everything and everybody. And you connect if you have that courage or you have suffered so much through your own judgments and that you just can't think anymore and suddenly you go into just presence. That presence is also intelligence.

Universal intelligence, you could call it. It does not originate in your body. It does not originate in your physical brain, but there is a relationship, of course, between it and your physical brain. You could use the analogy of a radio transmitter. The radio transmits something.

It doesn't produce it. But when you destroy the radio, it seems that it's gone. It isn't. It's the presence that pervades the entire universe. So it's intelligence, universal intelligence.

So it's not just the absence of judgment. It also begins to operate in your life. In other words, the way in which you deal with things and situations and people changes because a greater intelligence that not the egoic mind deals with situations and people. It's also the source of all creativity. So encountering the transcendent dimension improves your life, but this is not what we are focusing on here.

What can happen as a result of discovering and bringing into your life the transcendent dimension. Our focus here is the transcendent dimension itself. The rest looks after itself, how it manifests in your life and so on. Spiritual awakening means the person shrinks, so to speak, and presence grows. But enough of the person remains to be to be an effective instrument for presence.

Because sometimes the presence can speak through you or inspire your mind. At other times, it's just an emanation, just a peaceful but vibrantly alive space. So the the person is then just becomes an instrument through which presence can express itself. You no longer confuse that instrument, which is really predominantly the mind and of course also the physical body, you're no longer confuse that with who you truly are. And as the awakening process continues to unfold in you.

You find more and more situations in your life where you you are the presence predominantly rather than the person. In other words, less and less judgment comes into your mind, which of course means thoughts, and is replaced with just an alertness. It's not easy. Don't underestimate the momentum behind the ego, the pull of the ego, which has been there for thousands of years, It will reassert itself at first very quite frequently. And the time comes when you are able as it asserts itself, you can still be there as the observing presence.

That's a huge step forward. You know it's there. You're not totally in the grip of your reactions and your opinions and your judgments. At the moment a judgment comes out of your mouth, you know, oh, there it goes. It's the ego.

And you don't need to verbalize that. You just know it. It depends on your degree of readiness, but, the ego can be quite persistent. That's fine. We are part of an evolutionary shift, a shift in consciousness, And the ego is something that's a collective phenomenon.

You inherit it. The greatest thing is the discovery of yourself as presence. So my suggestion is to practice when you're alone, those times, and you're not being challenged by anything in particular, do routine activities, perhaps perform this or that activity as and be the presence rather than the person, which means you're not thinking while you do it. You're just present while you do it. All the all simple contemplation of things around you.

You listen. You look. You perceive. And the loudness is there. No interpretation.

No labeling. If you are one of those people who are who is reactive in traffic, gets angry about other drivers or this traffic situation. That's another area you can practice and realize you're generating totally unnecessary suffering for yourself through unconsciousness. The ego gets stronger if you get angry even at another driver. You grow as an ego.

The other day, I was trying to get to turn left from an intersection, and a driver shouted at me. And he shouted, bad driver. Now whether he was right or wrong, I don't know. He meant me. Now the ego would have reacted because when somebody judges you, you feel the ego feels diminished.

But I just allowed it to be, and it passed through me, and that was it. And then you are there when you listen to people. You ask somebody a question, you listen, you're there as the presence, not the person. More and more situations, feel yourself as that presence. And that presence is inherently alive and alert.

And that's where you then derive your sense of worthiness from. Because as long as you are only in the the mind, only the person, you're always comparing yourself to other people, and then you derive your sense of worthiness or unworthiness from your mental comparison with others. Or what the world tells you about how worthy you are. Am I a VIP in the eyes of the world, or am I nobody in the eyes of the world? Am I important, or am I unimportant?

And people agonize about these things. They feel I'm not good enough. Or if you have a superiority complex, then you have to prove yourself all the time against others, and you become a jerk. But you don't know that. Only others can know that.

And that's very, it's very important for the human being to feel his or her essential value, worthiness. But is it possible to arrive at that without comparison? What do I possess relative to that person? Where do I live relative to where that person lives? What have I achieved relative to what somebody else has achieved?

How do I look? What do you think of me? Very interesting to the ego. That is never enough. Even if the world tells you you're VIP, it's not enough.

There's still fear that tomorrow you may no longer be a VIP. So the worthiness has to come from a deeper place where you no don't need any comparison. It has nothing to do with your past or anything you have done or failed to do or achieved or not achieved. A more essential sense of your that value, that infinite worthiness and that's presence. Albert Einstein said the true value of a human being is determined by the extent to which he or she is free of the self.

The self, of course, meaning the egoic entity. Wonderful insight. And when this true worthiness value emerges, you don't compare yourself to others anymore. You don't have to. And what the world tells you is not important.

What the world tells you who you are. Now somebody might say, well, if I no longer have that sense of unworthiness, I'm not going to strive to become worthy. And I'm I may not be motivated to achieve great things if I already have the sense of worthiness and don't need to become better than others to enhance how I see myself and how others see myself, maybe I'm not going to do anything anymore. It is true, of course, that many people, many people's strongest motivation for doing whatever they do is to feel more worthy in their own eyes and in the eyes of others. But if that is your motivation, You never really arrive at that place of true worthiness.

Even if you achieve whatever it is you thought would make you worthy, it does for a while and to some extent, but it doesn't last. If you meet people who have been very rich and famous for more than a couple of years, you can talk to them and they will tell you that they also encounter the sense of unworthiness. The moment they achieve what they wanted to achieve, they feel good for a while. And then I'm not enough. You might remember Princess Diana who married Prince Charles.

She had everything. She was born in a castle. She had wealth and high social status and good looks, and the entire world thought she was a kind of goddess, at least that all the magazines said. And later on, we realized she was very unhappy and had this deep sense of unworthiness. And many of the people that you read about and see in the news, and they are shown as if they were the great examples of what you also should strive for, if you look underneath the surface, they are unhappy.

So true worthiness comes from a much deeper place and it is inseparable from that presence. It emanates, so to speak, from the transcendent dimension. It goes beyond who you are as a person. That is the essence of who you are. That's the only thing of absolute value.

And that is why ancient philosophers philosophers in ancient Greece and so on to talk about this. They used the word, the good. There were huge discussions with Plato and others, discussion of what is the good. They all talked about that. And of course, this is the one absolute good.

It's not the good of the polarity good and bad, it's the good that is deeper than good and bad. It is the absolute. It is the one. It is in you. But it is not confined to this body.

It's not the body. And also Jesus, when they, when somebody addressed him and said, good teacher, can you tell us this or that? He said, don't call me good. There's only one good, or only one is good. Really he's saying, Only the one is good, and that is the good that is in you, in me, it can be realized, but don't confuse the person that you see with the good.

I am the good, not as the person, but as the presence. You are the good, not as the person, but as the presence which animates, which shines through the person. And ultimately, they are not separate. There isn't a person and the good. The person is the ripple on the surface of the ocean.

That's all. If you think you are the ripple and that's your identity, then you're in for trouble because you're not going to be around for very long and you are threatened by many other ripples. But if you realize that you're not really the ripple of the ocean, then that's liberation. This is our live meditation. Which basically is learning to stop thinking.

Which sounds a little paradoxical because usually, learning involves thinking. So it's more like unlearning because we are conditioned to think continuously. And a lot of the time, it's not only unnecessary, but also destructive. Cuts you off from the depths of being, of who you are beyond the thinker. The most dreadful limitation for a human being is to know him or herself only as the thinker with its opinions and beliefs and reactions.

And whatever else the mind continuously comes up with. And that cuts you off from that vast dimension of consciousness that is there beyond thinking, not separate from thinking. It makes thinking possible, but it's deeper than that. And here as we meditate, which is probably not the right word because it sounds as if we were doing something, but we're not doing anything. We're not doing a meditation.

But we are here to realize that beyond doing, there's another dimension more vital and that we could call being. And to sense that in yourself, there needs to be at least a gap in this dream of thinking. Even a few seconds is already a slight deepening and a little bit of peace and aliveness and a little bit of joy coming through the cracks, so to speak, and what is otherwise a solid wall of thought. But we are here to go beyond that, not just Wait for the little cracks to appear occasionally, but to embrace that dimension, without which your life is not really that enjoyable. Frustrating, in fact.

Kindless. A continuous worry and upset, anxiety, complaining. That's what most people's lives consist of. Maybe, yes, the occasional crack is there. And maybe when they get tired, they feel a little bit better because they can't think anymore.

And then they go to sleep. But really, without that deeper dimension, life, is it worth living? I don't think so. What for? Do you think you'll ever sort out the problems in your life?

Never. You sort out one and another two appear. So there's nothing more important than this. And realize when you stop thinking or thinking subsides, we could say, you essentially are still there as a conscious presence. A still conscious, aware space.

And that still conscious aware space needs to be there in daily life. In the background. It can only be there when you don't think. You access it most deeply when thinking subsides. But as you sense it, you realize even when you think again, it doesn't go away completely anymore.

That conscious aware space can be there even while thinking happens or while you're talking to someone or dealing with things that need to be done. And then you can enjoy life every moment. But the enjoyment doesn't come from all the things that happen in your life. It comes from a deeper place. And then what happens or does not happen is of secondary importance.

You're not dependent on what happens or is not happening. Do you want it to happen? And then you move through life embodying two dimensions, the dimension of form, which is thinking and doing, and the dimension of the formless presence, the conscious aware space. The two are there simultaneously. The conscious aware space interpenetrates, if that's the word, the world of form.

Then perhaps you realize the truth of the ancient Buddhist scripture, one of the most famous sutras, which says form is emptiness. Emptiness is form. Form and formlessness. Being there as one. And so the way I put it occasionally, you may have heard it before, it's not the absolute truth.

It's a way of talking about it. There's two of you in any moment, in any situation. There's a person who thinks and does things and deals with life situations and people. There's the there's you as the person. And then there's the other, you as the conscious presence.

So you can still deal with things as a person, but behind that and even within that, there is the aware space. So you become a spacious person, so to speak. Anybody who has not realized their dimension within themselves are not spacious. And, of course, that still applies to many humans. They are what's the opposite of spacious, let's say, they are dense, the density of the person.

You can look at anybody that you know or even strangers when you observe them, how they go about life, how they deal with things, how they interact with people, how they react or respond to changing circumstances, especially when things go wrong, so to speak. By just observing them, you can sense and see how dense or how spacious they are. And that's not a judgment. You just see it in just the same way as you see whether it's light or dark. You're not judging when you say, oh, this is getting dark.

It's not a judgment. You just see it. So you can see it in others. And sometimes, so called people who are into spiritual awakening Even though it can sometimes very quickly, when they are challenged by events, become very dense. The spaciousness is lost.

So that's your spiritual practice. Of course, it's everyday life. Can you embody the spaciousness in addition to being a person? So you don't need to achieve perfection as a person. The person will always have certain limitations and shortcomings.

And when Jesus said, be ye perfect as your father in heaven is perfect, he doesn't refer to the world of form, but the deeper perfection, the wholeness that is spacious presence. In ancient Greek philosophy, they often use the term, the good. What is the good? Where is the good? And, of course, we know what it is and where it is.

The good is not in the world of form. The world of form is good and bad. Nothing stays good for that long. It either disappears or turns into its opposite. The good is within you, and it is the

formless presence, the source of aliveness of joy, the source of identity, the sense of who you are.

The source of that is beingness, presence, spacious awareness. I am. So when you say I am, that's formless presence. When you add something to it, it's form. But you can add something to it.

You can say I am a man. You can say I am a woman. And realize that which you add to I am is form, and the essence is the formless. So as a man or a woman, you yes. You accept and realize you are, you embody this or the other polarity.

But at the same time, you are the formless I am. So you're not totally identified with the polarity. You're not totally identified with being a man and totally identified with being a woman. Yes. You are that in the world of form as a temporary appearance.

Yes. And so you are no longer totally identified with anything in the world of form. To be identified with form is ego, of course. So remember in daily life to check, make sure there's some spaciousness left in you. Whatever you're doing, wherever you are, some stillness in the background and awareness and presence.

And that is we could call that lucid living. You've heard of lucid dreaming when you are asleep and dreaming, and you're suddenly you're aware that you are dreaming. And more importantly, you can have lucid living. I really recommend as a practice when you're not being challenged by anything. You're sitting alone in a room or you're wherever you may be waiting for this or that.

See if you can let go of thinking and just be there as a conscious presence rather than as a person. And it's more likely to stay with you when the challenges come. And you will find life becomes much more enjoyable that way. If you need something as a little help to take your attention away from thinking, breathe consciously, which means be aware of your breathing as the breath goes in and out and or feel the inner body, the energy inside your body. Feel that and or become aware of your surroundings, sense perceptions, alertness arises.

And that alertness is always there, whether it's to do with sense perceptions or becoming aware of your breath or feeling the inner body. That presence is always a heightened alertness without any tension, of course, but a heightened. Without that alertness, the waves of thinking will very easily roll back in very quickly. So it's only the alertness that lifts you out of thinking. And thinking has a gravitational pull.

It's been there for so long. It's very easy to get drawn back. You need to be very careful with electronic gadgets so that you're not continuously engaging and interacting with your cell phones and computers and so on. That continuously stimulates thinking and can lead to, intensify the lack of spaciousness in your life. So life, the universe, the cosmos wants to awaken.

You are part of that. You are not in the universe. You are it. And through you and, of course, other life forms, billions of life forms throughout the universe, the universe wants to go through this awakening. If you don't embrace it consciously and voluntarily and cooperate with that awakening impulse, Then it'll happen through intense suffering.

So you either cooperate with it or it happens through suffering. If suffering should come in, surrender. Then it can work very quickly if you don't resist it. Accept what is this moment only, and that takes you beyond suffering. So what we've just been practicing, what I've been talking about is the actual true purpose of your life, to live that, to bring that into your life, to embody that.

And everything else really is secondary. Whatever you do is secondary. But the consciousness that you embody is primary. Even success or failure, the so called success or failure, secondary. And quite easily, success could make you completely unconscious again, and failure could really awaken you.

And there's no absolute failure and absolute success. Success turns into failure because there are limitations, and it comes to an end. And failure is often a great opportunity. An opportunity to disidentify from the world of form internally. And suddenly, there's the formless essence, and there's peace.

So there's this beautiful question greeting. Peace be with you. Maybe it's not just question. It's peace be with you. You can of course, what that means is May that dimension from where peace arises be there with you.

There's no lasting peace in the world or the things of the world. Form. So with that, I leave you. Of course, the essence of who I am is in you, and we are one. One consciousness, one life.

Peace be with you.